

FIRE OF LIFE

by

HENRY W. NEVINSON

With a Preface by

JOHN MASEFIELD, O.M.



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS BOOK is an abbreviation of my three volumes of memories, *Changes and Chances* (1923), *More Changes More Chances* (1925), *Last Changes Last Chances* (1928), all published by Messrs. Nisbet. The difficult work of cutting the three down into the present single volume has been admirably done by my friend Mr. Ellis Roberts ; and I am deeply grateful to Mr. John Masfield, the Poet Laureate, for adding an Introduction.

I have taken the present title from the well-known four-line poem of Walter Savage Landor, called " Finis " :

*I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art :
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life ;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.*

H. W. N.

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PREFACE

I FIRST SAW MR. NEVINSON on a sunny summer Sunday morning near Hampstead Heath. Like the Ghost in Hamlet, he

Stalked majestic by.

My companion said : " Do you know who that was ? That was Mr. Henry Nevinson, the author of the *Plea of Pan*, one of the finest bits of modern prose." As I knew the *Plea of Pan* and the wise and witty papers which Mr. Nevinson was then writing for the *Daily Chronicle*, I gazed at his departing back with reverence. As Milton said of Satan (or somebody else said of George IV's cellar),

His Port was more than Human.

Since those distant days Mr. Nevinson has written many more " of the finest bits of modern prose." Many of the very best of them have appeared in his three delightful volumes of *Changes and Chances*. Now his publishers have decided to bring those three volumes, with some cutting and compression, into this single volume, so that more may come to know the moving record of a great life and time.

No better autobiography has been written in English in the last hundred years. Mr. Nevinson has been in touch and often in friendship with nearly all the great men and women and rousing movements of the last fifty years. As a young man he saw the aged Carlyle, and listened to some of the last of Ruskin's lectures ; in his maturity he combated slavery abroad and the wrongs of women at home. Now in his wisdom (as we will call what follows his maturity) he sees

his causes victorious, the slaves free, the women voting. He can reflect that he has been a friend to every generous cause that has stirred men's hearts in his time.

This is a great record, hardly equalled by any, surely not surpassed ; for in his friendships and championships he has not only used voice and pen, he has run risks and suffered. Probably few men have had more chances of being knocked on the head in the cause of liberty. Certainly no man with such a noble record to set down has had the charm, the wit and the graceful irony, which make this book so delightful and will make it memorable in time to come.

Some years ago, I hoped that he would add to his memoirs one, two or three books more. He has not yet done this, but all readers of this volume will hope with me that he will do so.

JOHN MASEFIELD

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CHAPTER I

THE ENGLISH MIDLANDS

I WAS NOT BORN IN ARCADIA. The only praise that I ever heard visitors give to my native town of Leicester was that it was clean. They always said that, and they said no more. All that they could see was a collection of dull streets with little, red-brick, slated houses for the workers in the hosiery, elastic-web, and boot factories ; a few old ruins, not very picturesque ; a few old inns and churches ; a Temperance Hotel for dreary meetings ; a pitiful Museum of stuffed birds and Roman "remains" ; and an unusual number of Nonconformist chapels. The country around was to them equally uninteresting—a sluggish little river, hardly distinguishable from the sluggish little canal with which it was sometimes merged ; monotonous or slightly undulating fields, stretching far away to north, east, and south, divided by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and appreciated by foxhunters alone ; on the west a few insignificant hills, interspersed with granite quarries and insignificant coal-mines, hardly worth the working. As to society ! No wonder our visiting relations always looked happier and happier as the hour of their departure approached. I can now imagine the satisfaction with which they watched their luggage being strapped securely upon the top of their railway-carriage (the custom of those days), and with what a sigh of relief they sank into their seats as the train began to move.

No doubt, the town and country were dull, and so were we. There was a theatre, but we never went to it, well knowing it to stand upon the road to hell. There were dances in winter, but we never learnt to dance, for the devil

lurked even in quadrilles. There was a Free Library, but we never took out a book, though my father was on the Committee, and when it met, late dinner was at six instead of five-thirty. Our secular reading was almost limited to ancient volumes of the *Penny Magazine*, and the current number of the *Sunday at Home*, which usually had a religious story in it besides the page of sermon called "The Pulpit in the Family."

The *Arabian Nights* were banned, probably as "immoral," though we were never told the shameful reason. Fairy stories were banned because they were untrue. In my early teens I bought a Shakespeare in one volume, but my mother was so full of horror at finding it that I hid it away. "It is a great immoral book," she said to me, in one of her rare outbursts of feeling; "I know some people put it next the Bible, but that is mere wickedness." Soon afterwards I ordered a Latin copy of the *Imitatio Christi* at a shop in the big market-place. But the bookseller told my father, and he stopped the order, in one of his rare outbursts of rage. For the book was Popish, and hatred of "the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities" devoured him.

We lived in proud and quiet seclusion, as became gentlefolk on pilgrimage through this brief life to an eternity of bliss or woe. We were allowed to consort with the families of clergy (Low Church clergy), doctors, and military officers. But we were heartily glad there was only one family of each class, numbering nine children altogether, and of those we disliked five. The Vicar of St. Margaret's, it is true, had four or five children, one of whom was to become stroke of the Lincoln eight, and the beloved Canon Lloyd Jones, of Peterborough and Northampton; and another the well-known magistrate, writer, and mother of my son, the painter. But we were not intimate with them because their father was High Church and put his choir into surplices. The other inhabitants of the town we divided into vulgar manufacturers, easy objects of satire, and the "lower classes," of whom we knew nothing.

In such surroundings, childhood might seem to some people dull and unhappy, but mine was far from dull, far from unhappy. The very strictness provided moments of excitement, as when my ungoverned rage drove the nurse-maid downstairs crying, "Please, Mum, Master 'Enery's got his tantrums again!" And somehow romance crept in. On most days my mother sent me on errands into the town, and I scudded through the streets at full gallop, partly in pride of speed, but chiefly because I was a secret messenger bearing orders of deadly import. From the earliest years I was possessed by a passionate longing, not so much for solitude as for the wilderness. A verse in one of our numerous hymns ran :

*Could I but find some cave unknown
Where human foot had never trod.
Yet there I should not be alone,
On every side there would be God.*

To the last two lines I was indifferent, but I loved the first two, repeating them to myself as a wish instead of a condition. For the same reason I loved the line "O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent," for we used to sing that hymn, not being aware of its dangerous authorship. My mother used to say, "I know you'll be a hermit and live among the rocks," and no lot seemed to me more enviable, except perhaps a wandering tinker's. So when at last it was decided that the Bible was insufficient knowledge for this Vale of Tears, and I was sent to a curate for Latin, Greek and spelling, I readily joined a gang for the destruction of windows and gas-lamps, imagining myself a freebooter or march-trooper. The curate himself was partly responsible for this perilous element of romance, for he lent me all the novels of Walter Scott bound up in one huge volume, which I hugged about with me like a ponderous nugget of gold. The same curate thrashed Latin grammar into his boys with more pitiless violence than I have ever seen in any

school or regiment ; but he perceived the beauty of Virgil, and through Virgil he gave me my first inkling of beauty in literature. They tell me he still lives, as vicar of a London church. If so, I thank him both for his sense of beauty and for his violence. In comparison with him, no human being has ever seemed to me terrific.

But more deeply rooted than the sense of beauty in literature, though in later years inextricably mixed with it, was my passion for what is called Nature. Through the dullish country that surrounded the town I ranged hungrily searching for any gleam of wildness, and, with almost unendurable delight, sometimes finding it—in a gorse-grown hollow between Stoughton and Houghton-on-the-Hill, or in the woods of Billesdon Coplow, or in a bit of marsh near Blaby, or in Groby Pool, where I learnt to skate, slithering over the five miles to and fro along the frozen Ashby road ; or when we drove out, every spring, to see the hyacinths there, blue among the trees as the water itself. And beyond Groby rose “ the Forest ” in low hills of ancient granite—Bradgate and Old John, Swithland, Buddon Wood, and the summit of Bardon itself, rising 800 feet above the sea and looking far over the Midland plains. And near by was the Trappist monastery, where no one spoke, except the Guest-Master, who once, when we asked the time, replied, “ Time is the dog that barks us all to hell,” an observation which none of us doubted was to be fulfilled in his case.

My life as a child in the country was broken by occasional visits to my grandfather's house in London, in which one event in the day's routine seems especially distinctive. It was as essential as the peculiar smell of the old house itself—that fragrant mixture of flowers, spices, resin and I don't know what besides. I mean the event of family prayers, so different from our rites at home, and so much more alarming. For with us the head of the family performed the worship throughout, but at my grandfather's they “ read round,”

so that even the youngest and feeblest was compelled to take a terrifying share. At half-past eight the butler clanged a great brass bell where it might be heard through bedrooms, gardens, and fields, and I have known grown-up women shed tears when they were late for that bell's warning. Into the long dining-room the sons and daughters of the house entered by one door, and when they were ranged on chairs around the breakfast china, the lower door opened, admitting the retainers in file, according to rank, the housekeeper coming first and the butler last, like the non-commissioned officers acting as guides to a company on parade. All took their seats, the women on chairs, the men on a bench covered with green baize, and the ceremony began.

When the disjointed reading was finished, all books were shut, and the commentary was listened to with minds vacant and at rest. That over, we turned round to kneel, amid a feminine rustle of silk from my aunts and stiff cotton from the maids. With faces pressed to the backs of the chairs, we waited while a long prayer was read. Then all broke into "Our Father," with a mixture of basses and trebles, that I was once well shaken for describing as "giving tongue." In that repetition the deaf coachman went his own pace, and was generally left finishing "for ever and ever," after the blessing had been pronounced. We rose, and there was a pause while the servants demurely left the room. It was the established custom for one of the elder members then to make a leading remark so as to bridge the gulf between the eternities and the breakfast-table. If the Member of Parliament was there, the remark was expected to be political. Otherwise it usually turned on a missionary meeting, the weather, or the abominations of "the Tractarians," who, in my mind, were intimately connected with the fires of Smithfield as depicted in a terrific *Book of Martyrs*, the only really interesting volume in my grandfather's large library.

The school to which I was first sent was built and

organised on the model of an institution—and therefore was, as I hope, the very worst school in the country, except the workhouse schools, the industrial schools, the reformatories, and similar abominations maintained by the State, the municipality, or voluntary subscriptions.

Authorities in English schools may object that knowledge does not matter, and that the public school spirit is all. I should myself be inclined to consider knowledge of some importance even in public schools ; but still, everyone agrees that, fortunately for all concerned with education in those schools, knowledge is not its highest object. But for acquiring the other objects that are regarded as more important—skill in playing ball, the sporting spirit, manners, initiative, cleanliness, good-temper, endurance, happiness—what chance had we there ? Night and day no boy was ever alone. The classes were huge. Out of school we sat all together in one enormous schoolroom, except that the two highest forms had large and crowded class-rooms to themselves. No one was allowed to approach the dormitories in the daytime. They were arranged for publicity at night (the smallest holding fourteen, the largest sixty), with the idea of checking youthful vices ; which were not checked. We were known by numbers, not by names, just as convicts are. We were marched to and fro to meals in military formation, with a band. The food was bad ; the “ sick-house ” an abomination ; the “ bounds ” so narrow that we knew nothing of the surrounding country but for a dreary walk on Sundays accompanied by a dreary master ; and the only comfort to me was that the surrounding country was wretched and suburban, hardly cheered by a distant prospect of Hampstead Heath.

It was not a good place to start life from. Even the masters were dejected as well as neglectful, and I can imagine no more pitiable fate than theirs. Two of them actually ran away—one the French Master, who could endure English life no longer ; the other a strange and probably interesting

man, who had been long in America and used to spit at the ventilators over our heads, or into the hand of any eager pupil who held a hand out to advertise his knowledge of an answer. He knew, at all events, the geography of the United States, and beat into my head what little mathematics ever got there. The "classical master" knew a good deal of Greek, and contrived to get some of it into me as well. There was a "science master" too, but he presided over a huge form called "The Extra," into which all the exceptionally stupid boys were shot, there to study book-keeping and similar commercial pursuits, which rendered it a degradation for us even to walk or speak with them. The headmaster never taught anything, but he read morning prayers at half-past six, perambulated panting from class to class at least once a day, did the caning, and otherwise occupied his leisure. The second master must have been a remarkable man. Huge, fat, and Irish, he was the very model of a burlesque abbot, and rumour whispered that he had been in the Austrian army and had killed men. Consequently he taught French to the youngest boys, and kept order with great success in the lower school. There was one terrific moment when, catching me out of bed, he uttered in deep and unctuous voice the awful words, "Fifty-three, you are degenerating! I have seen men shot for less disobedience than yours." Also he played the organ in church, and once when a fussy little master asked him the date of some event at breakfast, he replied, "Dates? Dates? A most ungentlemanly thing to know, dates?" What became of him I do not know.

Our standard in football must have been higher than in learning, for one boy, with whom I used always to go for dull walks along the road, afterwards won fame playing for England in the international matches. And another, to whom I was passionately attached, as he was to me, made an epoch in international "Rugger." In body and mind he was an extraordinarily beautiful youth, and long after

he was drowned in crossing a river in India, I used to find his name mentioned in sporting papers as marking a date in the development of football. Perhaps some aged players still remember Willie Hutchinson, but no one can remember him so well as I. For his mother must be long dead.

Of the hideous and degrading years which I passed in that institution I need recall no more, but may now issue forth again on the surface of the bright world.

In my beloved old school upon the Severn I can see now that we were not educated at all ; no scientific methods were tried upon us. I doubt if any of the masters had even heard there was such a thing as a science of education. To them education was a natural process which all decent people went through, like washing ; and their ideas upon it were unscientific as was our method of "swilling," when we ran down naked from the bedrooms to sheds in the back-yards, sluiced cold water over us with zinc basins, and then came dripping back to dry upstairs. And yet I do remember one young mathematician whose form by the end of his hour was always reduced to a flushed and radiant chaos ; and when the other masters complained, he replied that this was part of his "system." So I suppose that he at all events was scientific, and had possibly studied "Pädagogik" in Germany.

For the rest I cannot say that the ingenuous art of Greek, though we learnt it faithfully, softened our manners much, or forbade us to be savages. One peculiar custom may stand for many as an instance of the primitive barbarity which stamps upon any abnormal member of a herd. Since the last Pancratium was fought at Olympia, no such dire contest has been seen among men as our old steeplechase. Clad in little but gloves—a little which grew less with every hundred yards—the small bands of youths tore their way through bare and towering hedges, wallowed amid bogs,

plunged into streams and ponds, racing over a two miles of country that no horse would have looked at. The start was at the Flash side of the Severn, and if I had cleared the first stream and the hedge beyond it with one clean bound, as my young brother did, I would have it engraved on my tombstone : " He jumped the Flash ditch. R.I.P." The winner of the race was, of course, the boy who came in first ; but the hero of the school was he from whom the most blood was trickling at the finish, and who showed the bravest gashes on his face as he walked down the choir of St. Mary's at next morning's service. The course for the display of all this heroism was marked by the new boys, whose places as " sticks " were allotted by the huntsman the day before, the whole school accompanying him ; and by immemorial custom the most unpopular new boy of the year was always set at the last post—a slippery stump of ancient tree projecting in the very midst of a particularly filthy pond. As we drew nearer and nearer the place, all of us advancing at a gentle trot, one could see the poor creature growing more and more certain that he was the boy. We all exchanged smiles, and sometimes his name was called out ; for all, except himself, had agreed who it would probably be. At last the pond was reached, and we stood round it in a thick and silent circle, awaiting the public execution of a soul. The boy's name was called. He came sullenly forward, and made a wild leap for the stump. Invariably he fell short, or slipped and plunged headlong into the stagnant water, whilst we all yelled with satisfaction. Wallowing through the black slush and duckweed, he clambered on to the tree at last, and stood there in the public gaze, declared the most hateful boy in all the school. Upon himself the ceremony had not always the elevating effect at which we aimed. For I remember one disappointed moralist in the Fourth Form remarking, " Frog's Pond doesn't seem to have done that fellow any good. He wants kicking again."

CHAPTER II

CHRIST CHURCH MEADOWS

TWO YEARS of unusual misery and failure, followed by two years of radiant joy and success—that is the record of my Oxford life. The misery and failure were partly due to the place, but chiefly to my own nature. As I was neither rich nor titled, but only a “Junior Student” or Scholar, receiving money left to the college for the encouragement of true religion and useful learning, I was naturally put in the Meadow Buildings, overlooking a dank and unwholesome swamp. The hope, as we satirically asserted, may have been that we scholars might die there of some feverish chill and save the thrifty Bursar the expense of our scholarships.

Within the walls of the House I was isolated from my natural friends in time and position. One of the Scholars in my own year was an effeminate-looking person, apparently too petulant or fastidious for this world ; the other an uncouth creature, apparently what the Germans call *Blödsinnig*, and I think I never spoke to either of them. The “Westminsters” of that and the previous years were a peculiarly fine and attractive group, forming the centre of the most intellectual and agreeable set in the college. But I was far too shy and self-distrustful even to think of entering their charming circle.

One Christmas Vac. a frank and kindly, though benighted young Tasmanian urged me to go with him to Paris, and for a month we stayed together at the Hôtel Corneille, near the Odéon in the Latin Quarter. Paris was at the time much disturbed about Marshal MacMahon (*J’y suis, j’y reste*), and England was disturbed, as so often, about the

bogey of Russia. My acquaintance insisted upon storming down the streets at night shouting the patriotic song, "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do!" For, being a Colonial, he thought very highly of England. Happily the passers-by looked on him as only mad; or perhaps they murmured, as a Frenchwoman murmured at the sight of a wild dancing, "*Toujours la jeunesse!*" We tramped up and down the city, seeing all the museums and ancient buildings, made our way out to Versailles, St. Cloud, St. Denis, Vincennes, and the rest, observing especially the remains of the German siege and the Commune. But my ignorance of French history and language stood like a wall between me and interest, and the only points I recall with real pleasure were, first, long conversations with old John O'Leary, the exiled Fenian, who sat every evening in a café upon the Boulevard St. Michel and instructed me for the first time in the meaning of Ireland to an Irishman, and the cause of the deep hatred of my country that glowed in his fine and mournful eyes, while he treated me with a courtesy far more than paternal. And, secondly, my first visit to the Comédie Française to see an early night of a revived play called *Hernani*, by Victor Hugo, whose name even I had heard. I did not think much of the play. It seemed tedious with rhetoric and boundless soliloquies. But the woman who played Donna Sol! From her first word (I think it is *Je descends*) down to her "coy, reluctant, amorous delay," when her lover urges her to the marriage bed! Then, the horn! the distant horn! "The horn of the old gentleman!" as George Meredith calls it. The lamentation over the dead! I had known nothing to compare with that woman, nor could ever know. Night after night I went, and day after day I walked up and down the railings of the Parc Monceau where she then lived, carrying a big bunch of violets which I had not the courage either to leave at the door or to throw into the kitchen window. How the exquisite Sarah, in the glory of her youth, would have laughed if she had

beheld her awkward, red-faced, speechless English adorer !

In Christ Church my incorrigible shyness was alone sufficient to prevent any friendly association with the Dons. If I saw one coming across Tom, I would turn back or go round by the other side. It never occurred to me that they could possibly take any interest in me and no doubt I was right.

From the Dons' point of view my record was poor, and when I went down I received a very chilly testimonial from my tutor, and none from anyone else. Like many of my misfortunes, this was an unspeakable blessing, for with good testimonials I might have been a schoolmaster, or a Government official, or even a bishop—positions for which I was quite unsuited. But I do regret that I was then too young and too bashful to become acquainted with the distinguished men whom I could have seen every day in my own great college. Pusey and his unhappily deformed son, Liddon and Edward King (afterwards the beloved Bishop of Lincoln) lived within its walls, like cromlechs telling of battles that were then not so very long ago ; and though they certainly would not have befriended me, they were distinguished men, good to have known. My own tutor, Mr. Madan, whose lectures were a farce, and who had stood hesitating for years whether his belief was sufficient to justify him in taking Holy Orders, must have held more stuff in him than appeared ; for when he joined the Christ Church Mission in Uganda, which I called the " Crocodile's Comfort," he compiled a Swahili Grammar that I found many years afterwards used by travellers in the very centre of Africa, and it is quite possible that he converted some African natives to his degree of religious indecision.

Then there was Dodgson, with his clean, clear-cut, white face, tall hat and meticulous clerical uniform, the very model of a precise and starchy Don, but already long known to the whole world as the " Lewis Carroll " who wrote the two best children's books ever written. I think he taught only Euclid and a simple algebra to Pass-men, but he may have

taught higher mathematics too, if anyone cared to learn them. On the philosophic side there was "Dickie" Shute, who, dressed in riding breeches, knew a lot about dogs and Aristotle, and was probably the most penetrating mind in Oxford; a born sceptic, a pitiless teacher, a cruel satirist to his pupils; and he had, besides, written an excellent book identifying Truth with the expression of Reality, and driving Oxford metaphysicians and Churchmen to distraction. There was Stewart, who also knew all about Aristotle, and for his Scottish solemnity was known as "The Megalopsuch," but who hid beneath his solemnity a solemn Scottish humour that sometimes came upon me so suddenly during his lectures that I could not restrain my laughter, though he never laughed. Perhaps this rather pleased him, for he betted I would obtain all manner of honours, and paid up his debts when I did not obtain them, so that I still owe him at least half a crown. And there was Reginald Macan, an Irishman, who had actually been in Germany, could read German, sang Schubert and Handelian songs with superb voice and grotesque grimaces, and lectured to portentous length upon Herodotus, with similar grimaces, but with great interest, though to no purpose for the Schools. Nor ought one to forget, though I was on the point of forgetting, the wayward and aloof but most attractive figure of York Powell, who seemed to belong to London rather than to Christ Church, though he had rooms in Peck, and was to be seen sometimes flitting about with outspread gown, never mixing with Dons or Undergrads., and apparently speaking to no one. Yet, behind the glasses of those brooding but excitable eyes, and under the cover of that copious brown beard, what wit was concealed, what humanity and culture and knowledge of uncommon and beautiful truth, whether in letters, art, or history!

But midway, as it were, between the venerated memorials of ancient wars and the marching pioneers of scepticism and culture stood the most characteristic group of Oxford, or at

least of Christ Church, in those merry days. For want of a distinctive name, they were called the Broad-High-Church Party. They strove hard to unite Catholicism with culture, not a difficult task, and also to unite authority with criticism, which perhaps is harder. Charles Gore, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, was among them, but outside the House. Among us, one of the choicest enthusiasts was Francis Paget, afterwards Dean of Christ Church and Bishop of Oxford. He was then the very model of the urbane and cultured ecclesiastic, young, refinedly humorous, capable of elegant epigram, a faultless verbal scholar (he had been at Shrewsbury before my time), exquisite in dress and bearing, polite to embarrassing excess, and almost feminine in playful charm. But for my barbarism, it would not have been difficult for me to have won acquaintanceship, or even friendship, with the distinguished scion of my own school. But on that very account I all the more carefully avoided him, and when seated in his supersensual rooms for Latin compositions I assumed an even greater appearance of boorishness than was actually mine.

But the standard and motive and model of Francis Paget, as of all this younger school of Churchmen, whether lay or cleric, was Henry Scott Holland, I suppose the most inspiring personality I have ever known, except my own old master, Arthur Gilkes. Holland's service lay in arousing the Church to an enthusiasm, not inspired by fear, as I suppose the Wesleyans' largely was, but a joyful exhilaration of spirit, such as a young man or woman of perfect health and sanity may feel in starting out upon an adventure on a fine summer morning. By the senseless Oxford habit that invented "Rugger" and "Soccer," and converted the Cherwell into the "Cher," we called him "The Scotter." Partly it was affectionate intimacy, but somehow it gave the impression of speed, I suppose from association with the Scotch express. Speed, impetuosity, a mighty rushing wind—those are the ideas that his name still calls up to my mind. Body and soul

seemed always to be going at full gallop, as though the Holy Grail were just in sight, and he might hope to catch it, if only he could run fast enough. Hedge, ditch, and rail—nothing could stop him. Shouting, he swept over them all, just as with a shout he used to leap the brooks and gates when he took jumping parties out through the Oxford meadows along the upper river.

In those days we knew very little about that side of life which was so soon to absorb the world—the Social Question, the problems of poverty, the meaning and practice of social revolution. But in Holland's mind these questions were already thundering with persistence. Some years before I knew him he had called upon the resident tutors of Oxford to "wake up to a sense of life and death and the old primal sympathies." As early as 1873 he had written to Dr. Talbot, afterwards Bishop of Winchester: "I cannot but see 'self-complacency' as the real clerical vice; the self-complacency of knowing that you at least have explained life quite easily, and can only pity those who find the answer to the riddle so hard to find." Strange thoughts in the Oxford where one of our number, as Stephen Paget records, was capable of saying, "The difference between the working man and us is that we can explain him, but he cannot explain us!" After all, Holland's particular service to his time was that he dragged his reluctant University, and even his decent Church, by the scruff of the neck out into the open from their fugitive and cloistered lairs, and convinced his followers that only by action in the storm and stress of the world can doubts be dispersed and the personal soul "find salvation."

Once when I met Scott Holland in my tutor's rooms, he laughed generously at an ironic joke upon which I ventured, and his laughter filled me for the evening with proud exhilaration. But the opportunity fled by, and my painful self-distrust hid me from the man. For nearly three years I stood aloof in lonely unhappiness, severed by my own shy nature from those who were necessary to my soul.

Suddenly—suddenly—one of the greatest changes in my existence came. In despair of happiness, I was turning to the study of subjects that might be useful for the Indian Staff Corps or the Ceylon Civil Service, in which I knew a former schoolfellow ; but I was still nominally reading for Greats, partly with the peculiar hope of finding God in metaphysics. Then it suddenly occurred to a Westminster scholar of my own year—a leader in the very set to which I should naturally have belonged but for my *gauche* timidity—that he would ask me to read with him. I don't know what inner motive may have guided him to so queer a choice, but he told me afterwards that he had regarded me as an interesting eccentric in whose rooms he could perhaps read without interruption, whereas in his own he was interrupted by music, in which he particularly excelled, by a genuine passion for all art, especially Italian art, and by delight in the urbane and intellectual circle to which he belonged.

To me that friendship was not a self-surpassing movement from well to better. It was a transfiguration from the commonplace. The whole of my being was changed and illuminated with something of celestial light. It was not merely the amount I learnt from him of the intellectual and beautiful world, though that was inestimable. For though, I believe, born in Staffordshire within sight of the Derbyshire hills, he was a Londoner bred, and both at Shrewsbury and in Oxford I found in the Londoners an urbanity of knowledge and of manners far above the standard of us boorish provincials. From childhood he had been brought up in the midst of a society where conversation upon the great movements of the time, whether in religion, art or politics, was the common event of every day. Ideas and people which I hardly conceived of were quite real and actual to him. His knowledge of music and of English literature was very unusual, and his appreciation or criticism still seems to me unerring after forty years of listening to many famous critics. It was the same with art, at all events with Italian art, of

which I was then entirely ignorant. With a laughing or scornful criticism he purged my mind of many crudities, many false idols, many harsh and intolerant aspects of life. It was characteristic of him and of our friendship that the subject of "sex" was never once mentioned between us.

I suppose it was self-confidence that he gave me, or self-appreciation—a sense of my own possible value which I never had before. If this extraordinary man, so highly esteemed by everyone who knew him, liked to be with me better than with others, I unconsciously concluded that there must be something valuable in myself.

Among my friend's many other services, second, but only second to his gift of courage and expansion of heart, was his revelation to me of beauty in language and the highest forms of art. In music, I had learnt the violin just enough to take an uncertain part in quartets and trios, especially Corelli's, with my elder brother, who was an admirable 'cellist, and with an old violin master, who loved music and played in an enthusiastic but execrable style. I also knew some dozens of Schubert's and Schumann's songs, which nearly always went sounding to perfection in my head, though I could not utter a note with assured accuracy.¹ But now my friend began to reveal to me the glory of Bach and Beethoven—a glory which has only grown upon me as my years have grown. As to style in writing, we had many ironic and half-serious contests, for he insisted upon beauty of style, and I always felt an amused contempt for "stylists," such as I still feel.²

And then there was pictorial art. I had learnt a good deal about the English school of landscape from my father's small collection of pictures, and had myself taken the utmost delight in drawing. But of Italian art, as I said, I was

¹ Music, good or bad, has always run in my head, I think, without a moment's intermission. Even during prolonged sleep it seems to continue, for the same music sounds there again directly I awake.

² This was Philip G. L. Webb, afterwards distinguished as poet, musician and Hon. Secretary of the Handel Society.

entirely ignorant, partly because it was mainly Catholic ; or else it was pagan, which was harmless in comparison, unless naked. Now to the highest forms of art my eyes were opened, and for many years they counted among my chief delights. " Art " was much the fashion in the Oxford of those days—the days of the " aesthetic movement "—but just for that very reason I had been inclined to sneer at the talk about it as either effeminate or priggish. With the same insensate or sensible crudity I had neglected to attend the courses of lectures which Ruskin was then giving in the theatre of the Parks Museum. In the days when I went to chapel I used to watch that strange figure pass up the pavement of the choir, which is decorated with symbolic mosaics of Temperantia, Justitia, Fortitudo, and other virtues supposed to be distinctive of men and women, and desirable for youth. When on Sundays we all were dressed out in white surplices like angels, Ruskin used to sit in a stall behind the row of us scholars on the north side of the choir. I always sat on the south side myself, because it gave a better view of the Norman arches and St. Frideswide's chapel, and so I could contemplate him at leisure—the mass of tawny hair, carefully brushed into order ; the bright grey, nearly blue eyes, usually quiet and meditative under tawny and projecting eyebrows ; the eagle nose, the long and sensitive mouth, the rather receding chin ; the whole face thin, well-wrinkled, and then still clean-shaven ; the bright blue necktie wound two or three times round an upstanding collar, not hanging down over the shirt-front, but fastened by some invisible pin ; the head inclined a little to the left, owing to the draughtsman's habit of raising the left shoulder ; the loose and unfashionable clothes, partly concealed by the long gown ; the whole bearing shy, and showing just a touch of a Don's self-conscious and apologetic manner, as much as to say, " Yes, I know I am distinguished, but please do not condemn me unheard."

CHAPTER III

THE SEARCH IN GERMANY

DURING OUR LAST TERM in Christ Church, my friend and I launched out upon various delightful pursuits, the chief of which was the study of German. Reginald Macan encouraged us, and advised beginning with Heine's *Briefe über Deutschland*, which we spelt out together with eager appreciation. No writer could have suited our mood better at that time, and throughout life we have both retained for Heine an affectionate admiration. But it was not Heine who drew me to Germany ; it was Carlyle. The influence of that dæmonic man of genius upon me and others was still incalculably powerful, though he was old and near to death. We did not accept his theories of government, we hardly realised or noticed them, and when Party Liberals denounced him we were astonished. To us he was a wide-spreading and revolutionary force, working like leaven—the *Sauerteig* to which he compared himself—fermenting, permeating, purifying, leavening the whole lump. And the lump was the British society of the time—sticky, stodgy, inert—the self-complacent society which stood enraptured before the beauties of commercial prosperity, competition, increase of population and cheapness of labour.

I escaped one day from Westminster School, where I was vainly attempting to teach classics amid the crowding chaos of a vast schoolroom, and took my stand nearly opposite the familiar house in Cheyne Row. A few biggish trees grew on the further side of the street to "Number 5," and having hidden myself carefully behind the largest, I waited. The brougham was standing ready there, and presently the door

opened. Supported by Froude, a small and slightly bent old figure came down the steps. A loose cloak, a large, broad-brimmed hat, a fringe of white beard and white hair, a grave and worn face, deeply wrinkled and reddish brown, aged grey eyes turned for a moment to the racing clouds—that was all.

So, under Carlyle's influence, I went to Germany. And thus began my long and intimate acquaintance with Goethe's ghost. I did not find in him what Carlyle had found, for Carlyle imported into his reading his own religious and moral fervour. I did not find God in any personal sense—in no more personal sense than I had found Him in the "Deus" of Spinoza. But I found a very remarkable and lovable man, and not all the dust and ashes that commentators and biographers have sprinkled thick over his memory have been able to obliterate my admiration and friendship.

Goethe in his youth felt a strong attraction to the romance of departed times, and to me Germany was still the home, sweet home of ghosts. When, on my first morning in Weimar I went with a French youth to see a great review of the local army contingent, I was certainly amazed at the exact precision of the drill, but my real interest lay in the distant views of the Thüringen Forest, and the low, dark hills stretching south into unknown and haunted regions. I hardly knew what I hoped to find in those dim woods of fir and dappled woods of beech. Spirits of the past often bore me company on my journeys, but, unhappily, I never succeeded in meeting either ghost or kobold or witch or fairy or any such desirable being in visible presence.

But I did succeed in catching hold of joy as it sped past me like a dream, or like the dear Middle Ages themselves. To wake up in a little wooden room of a little wooden village ; to go out into the forest air of early morning alone and tramp mile after mile through trees and over low hills, singing (I must repeat that I was alone) all the long series of Schubert songs and *Volkslieder* that came into my head ;

to live upon bowls of sour milk, with black bread and wild strawberries and at night to discover another little wooden village that seemed never to have stirred since it was built out of Noah's Ark ; or to reach some little town standing with walls and towers unmoved since Wallenstein slipped past it —those were joys sufficient to compensate for all the ghosts and fairies that I never found, and gradually the yearning for unincarnate spirits of every kind ceased to haunt me, though it sometimes returns :

*Weg, du Traum ! so gold du bist ;
Hier auch Lieb' und Leben ist :*

As a student in Jena, too, I attended morning lectures upon Kant and Goethe, besides Ernst Haeckel's lectures in morphology, which, as being outside my segment of knowledge, I visited only for the charm of the man and in admiration of his clear and humorous statement. Here a few Englishmen gave instruction to the youth of Jena in the habits and customs of boats and balls. By our example upon the river-reach called "Paradies," we proved to them how much steadier and quicker even one of their tubby old boats with fixed rowlock-pins would travel if their rowers kept some sort of time together. In the fields we showed them how much speedier a football with a blown-up bladder inside could move than their old leather case stuffed with protruding straw ; and how much more exciting was a game under rules and between sides than the exercise of kicking the ball whenever one could get near enough, without sides or rules. We also induced a limited number of the more adventurous to come for "runs" through the neighbouring forests and villages, sometimes climbing the Fuchsthurm hill or up to the Forest tower upon the opposite height ; sometimes "drawing" the idyllic hamlet of Ziegenhain (famed for its white beer), or running down the river bank towards Dornburg (with memories of Goethe

again), or over Napoleon's old battle-field to *Vierzehnheiligen*. Our light costumes aroused scandal, and our energy bewildered, but it was fine, almost dead of thirst, to reach the tall *Seidels* of Lager in a students' beer-house—so fine that when one of my best "hounds" purposely jerked my arm just as I began to drink, I poured the whole lot over his head with a rolling German curse, and in subsequent "runs" he ran better than ever.

But to the only German for whom I felt something like friendship all these jollities seemed child's play, unworthy of a denizen in this miserable world. He did not even approve the students' clubs and duelling, though I suggested that the richer students would suffocate in their own fat, or burst with beer, but for this blood-letting and the amount of exertion required for slitting the envied gashes upon each other's faces. He would gladly have beheld the outside world vanish altogether, and, indeed, he often behaved as though it had vanished already. As his father was an intimate friend of Schopenhauer, I suppose the son was born unhappy. He was certainly born with the religious or metaphysical mind peculiarly developed, and though he mocked at metaphysics as cobwebs of the brain, he could no more escape from their net than a fly from the web. He would spend whole days and nights in meditation upon the mental and spiritual world, and as he had, unhappily, inherited a small income, just enough to keep him in food and lodging, he had no external interests as rivals to religion and philosophy, except his own health and his own clothes, about both of which subjects he cherished unusual theories. He even put the theories into practice, to the perpetual annoyance of his landladies and acquaintances. For he insisted upon uncommon kinds of cooking, washing, and garments, under and outer—the under garment ordained by the Jaeger ritual (which he reverently followed) and the outer consisting mainly of a tunic like an officer's, with a collar embroidered in coloured flowers, but no shirt-collar above it or tie beneath.

It was not due to this friend's influence that I subsequently entered upon a careful study of the German Army and its organisation. During my time in Jena I did not pay much attention to international or social questions. I was almost entirely occupied in literature, philosophy, teaching for livelihood, and athletics, varied by the joy of breaking away into solitude and striding up to the Luftschiff or through some other forest region. But it was impossible to ignore the international situation altogether. During my residence in Jena, Gordon fell at Khartoum, and some of the German papers triumphed over the disaster as "the beginning of England's end," strangely comparing it to the defeat of Crassus by the Parthians. Though Bismarck always declared himself no *Colonialmensch*, there was a good deal of trouble between him and our Colonial or Foreign Office about Walfisch Bay and other South African points. "Relations were strained," and the strain was not relaxed by a sudden and, as then was considered, a vast increase in our navy. The Boer War, Edward VII's arrangements with France and Russia, the panic of naval rivalries, and the other causes of fear and hatred that led to the tragedy nearly thirty years later, were still unimagined. Our ageing Queen, with chastening affection, still cherished the German Courts as the best matrimonial preserve for her dynasty, and the familiar jest about the elephant and the whale was accepted as sufficient guarantee of peace.

My observations on the football field showed me that the Germans, though not lissom or quick in movement, possessed an unusually high average of physical and muscular power. I put it down to their practice of gymnastics (*Turnerei*) common to all their schools, whereas it was then almost unknown among us. I thought of the stunted and puny figures in our big manufacturing towns—their narrow chests, their bad teeth, their brief and meagre lives. It is very humiliating for a patriot to discover that his race is being surpassed by foreigners in the measurement of pectorals, biceps, and

calves. Where did a quiet and drudging people like the Germans obtain such an advantage? Obviously from their army training, which included, not only gymnastic but outdoor life, regular exercise, and, most important of all, regular and wholesome, though dullish, food. Those were exactly the advantages supplied by our English universities, except that the food in them was not dull but varied and copious. Our universities turned out a fine average of physical development. If that was their function, they fulfilled it. But one must be rich to enjoy the advantages of a seat of learning. With what substitute for our universities could we provide our poor, our working men? The Germans had found a substitute in the army, and to the army, I thought, we English must also look for our redemption from physical decay. The army must become the university of the poor! For two years or three years their training should last. As at the ancient universities for the rich, a certain amount of mental information and instruction might be thrown in at leisure hours without infringing upon the ultimate purpose of health and strength. But, at all events, the sons of the workers must have an equal chance with the sons of landlords and manufacturers for developing a handsome, powerful, and healthy frame. Fresh air, good food, regular exercise—those are the staple necessities supplied by our highest education, and in a people's army the poor would find them all.

In this "New Model," rich and poor were to serve upon exactly the same terms, so that comradeship in arms might form the basis of a true democracy, and class distinctions be obliterated. In the unlikely or, at least, rare event of any wealthy Englishman wishing to receive higher intellectual education than he would naturally obtain in this athletic manner, the old universities would still be open to him after he had completed his course of training. I suggested that even the defence of our country might at some time require a larger force than we possessed in the middle 'eighties, but that was an object entirely subsidiary to the educational purpose

of my scheme. I studied the German system with praiseworthy tedium, toiling through its text-books and watching the drill, associating with the men in barracks, trying their food (which on one occasion brought me into violent collision with the rations cook), and being present at great Kaiser-manceuvres round Coblenz, which, unfortunately, were cut short by a terrible outbreak of cholera ; so that I had to abandon soldiering for a time and transfer my energy to the pleasant labour of cutting down trees to make a road through a forest in the Vosges.

But having obtained a fairly complete knowledge of the German army system, I developed my own scheme in an article which I sent round to the London monthly reviews and magazines. To my astonishment, they all rejected it in silence or with horrified alarm. Nor would my democratic proposal ever have reached the democratic mind had not W. T. Stead extended "hospitality" to an abstract of it in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Even that was a step-motherly hospitality. For in an editorial note he condemned it with all his power of righteous vituperation. All political and social writers, Liberal and Tory alike, combined in a howl of indignation and abhorrence, and I do not suppose that the Labour Party, if it had then existed, would have howled less vigorously than the rest.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE FIFTH CIRCLE

BEFORE MY SECOND SOJOURN in Germany I had met Samuel Barnett, the Vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel, and he had urged me to associate myself with the little "University Settlement," which then had a scanty habitation in Hooper's Square, and consisted of Thory Gardiner, Barnett's curate, Bolton King, and I think two others. When I returned, I found that Toynbee Hall had already been established in Commercial Street, and had received the blessing of Matthew Arnold, who assured the inmates that their names were written in the *Book of Life*. Persuasive though that assurance should have been, it was not the only reason why I lived in Petticoat Lane, close to the Hall, for two years, among bugs, fleas, old clothes, slippery cods' heads and other garbage, and contributed for many years longer such assistance as my knowledge of Greek, German, and military drill allowed. During these later 'eighties one was carried along by a tide setting strongly towards "social reform," "social economics," and all the various forms of "Socialism" then emerging as rather startling apparitions.

To myself Socialistic theories were not new, nor was practical knowledge of "the workers." Some years before (I suppose about the end of 1889) I had joined Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation as one of its earliest members; and for two or three years I had gone down regularly to Poplar to help Luke Paget, a Shrewsbury boy (afterwards Bishop of Chester), in his Christ Church Mission near the East London Docks. But the Federation was too abstract and doctrinal for my ignorant mind, and a Roman priest,

apprehensive lest a taint of Protestant learning might endanger their immortal souls, thrashed the Irish stevedore boys away from my efforts to teach them reading just as they had ceased nudging and giggling over the indecent sound of certain syllables—the only syllables they always contrived to spell out with accuracy. Toynbee Hall promised better. It was not hampered by theories, and it appealed to a more cultivated intelligence.

Of course, the main advantages of Toynbee and similar "Settlements" fell to the devoted pioneers who went down there "to spread the light," etc. Many of us received great enlightenment and some, in consequence, have risen to positions of distinction and emolument in Whitehall, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and other centres of government and social authority. I have known very few who did not shed their University priggishness within a year or so, and nearly all acquired the best kind of knowledge from our uneducated neighbours. But still I sometimes think that on the whole we did very little harm to others, and in a few instances we may even have increased the happiness and intellectual pleasure of those whom we hoped vaguely to benefit. Speaking of the young men among us who worked in the City or other business, Vaughan Nash, who himself became prominent down there during the Great Dock Strike, once said, "We shear the lamb all day, and temper the wind at night." And I think the wind was really tempered to many a fleeced and shivering lamb from Hoxton, Haggerston, and Bow.

Great in their various ways as were so many people who gave us their blessing in the East End, the vital heart of the whole business was Samuel Barnett himself. It is hard for me to speak of this remarkable man, for I knew him for twenty-five years, at times very intimately. When living in Whitechapel, I saw him nearly every day, and on Sunday mornings he usually invited me to discuss with him many perplexing and intimate questions of life. In public affairs I served under him year after year upon various committees,

trying to act upon his ideal of "personal service" rather than being content with theories, statistics, and the fashionable chatter. He would never have wasted a minute of life over lost causes, any more than I have ever wasted a minute ; but I did my best to support him in those victorious causes which heavy-hearted despair and torpid inertia call lost.

Knowledge makes it all the harder for me to explain the secret of his power. Except for large, deep brown, and very luminous eyes, he had no "physical advantage." He was small, frail, bald, far from "good-looking," and entirely unathletic, though he played tennis with a subtle adroitness akin to cunning. To people he liked his smile was quick and sympathetic, but he was far from being one of those winning priests who smile and smile, and whose arm seems always threatening to go round your neck. His look more commonly expressed indignation or impatience. Watts in his portrait just caught that expression, though "The Prophet," as some people called him, always tried to conquer impatience, as prophets should, and though he frequently repeated the true saying : "He that believeth shall not make haste." Among my own many sins he often rebuked that of not suffering fools gladly, attributing to me the very weakness to which he was himself exposed. And resistance to that temptation must have cost him an unceasing struggle ; for God knows he had plenty of fools to suffer !

He was not in the least eloquent. In speaking and writing his style was unmistakable, but unattractive. It was a marvel how he put thought so fine into form so little calculated to please. It was a style so easy to burlesque that all of us could reel off imitations upon any occasion, such as the fall of a horse or the lighting of the street-lamps. There was no passionate outpouring, no attempt at oratory or splendid language or moving appeal. It was thought cut to the bare bone ; short sentences crammed as full as they could hold and then left. To me, detesting all rhetoric, it came with relief ; but literary or emotional people went away

disappointed. "Protests against error become in their turn errors"; "Idolaters recognise no change"; "Unpopularity is no condemnation, but neither is an acquittal"; "The sense of sin has been the starting-point of progress"; "Quarrelling is the luxury of security"—how admirable such sentences are! Each would make a text for an essay. But when a speech or a sermon is chiefly composed of such sentences, and the ordinary mind is left to make what best it can of it, the ordinary mind refuses to be bothered, and it calls the speaker dull. You might as well try to rouse a congregation by reading Bacon's *Essays* or a chapter of Proverbs. Sometimes, but rarely, a touch of malice was added, as in his saying: "The modern Jew is Jacob without the ladder."

The heart of his power lay, I think, in a spiritual insight delicately sensitive to the difference between life and death. He laughed at me once for saying "All change is good," but he never doubted that there can be no life without change. We were all revolutionary then, though not so revolutionary, of course, as everyone is now. And yet I remember maintaining that Barnett was the extreme revolutionist of us all. His spirit was like leaven, or like new wine in old skins. He never formed habits or idolised machines. When everyone was extolling and imitating his idea of "Settlements," he quietly said to us, "I do not preach the duty of settling among the poor. I simply repeat the commandment, 'Love God.'" Of all the leaders I have known, he almost alone fulfilled the most difficult duty of leadership: he so hated idols that he was always ready to lead a revolution against himself.

As I knew a good deal about Greek, and something about English literature, I talked on these subjects to anyone in the East End who cared to listen. As I was a good distance-runner, I led a merry pack of human hounds, meeting at Aldgate Pump, and drawing Mile End and Cambridge Heath Road. And as I was an enthusiast for military

training, I took command of a Cadet Company in the hopes of ensuring some small amount of benefit to the enfeebled and undersized youths of Whitechapel and Shadwell, until my ideal of the Workers' University under General Service could be ordained. The idea of that Cadet Company (the first ever started for working youths) was due to Francis Fletcher Vane (afterwards a baronet), at that time resident in Toynbee. He was one of those who, like the Chinese, regard their ancestors with pious adoration ("Blue Bloode in every Veine," as our Toynbee satiric poet wrote), and I think he rather favoured me because he discovered that some of my ancestors were buried in the cathedral at Carlisle, his country town.

Somehow I did contrive to command that Company for ten or twelve years, drilling it regularly two or three times a week, first in Whitechapel and, for a much longer period, in Shadwell, beside the Basin where ships enter London Dock. In such forms of pleasure, regularity is the first necessity, and once when my subaltern missed a drill, I wrote to him : "I hope you are dead, for nothing but death could excuse your absence," and he never appeared again. But some knowledge of military affairs was also requisite, and for that I attended the drill of the Grenadier and Coldstream Footguards in the Tower and Wellington Barracks, going through the whole thing as a private, N.C.O., lieutenant, captain, and major with great diligence, so that in the end I drilled the cold-eyed critics in the ranks of those famous battalions with such success that I "passed school" with 98 per cent of the marks and special distinction—an honour I am more proud of than any reward for scholarship. But it was a nervous business, especially when, at the beginning, if I gave a wrong command, the whole battalion instinctively did the right thing.

All this martial circumstance ought to have overcome my plagueshy shyness. All the sharp decision of military commands ought to have overcome my torturing hesitation.

But shyness and hesitation still laid their blighting curse upon me, and those five or six years (say from the end of 1885 to the end of 1891) were a period of extreme wretchedness, sometimes hardly endurable. I tried to make money by various means—by helping in a biographical dictionary ; by writing a *Life of Schiller*, for a series ; by pretending to teach history at Bedford College (though, outside the history of Greece, I knew none) ; by lecturing for the University Extension Society upon German literature, and for various local societies upon Shakespeare and Browning, over the elucidation of whose poems, especially of *Sordello*, I spent many toilsome days with my friend George Bruce, the devoted servant of the Board Schools. But I detested teaching in all its forms, and was probably no good at it. I detested London and all its population. I longed to be out in the wild world, but could find no issue. I knew I ought to plunge into journalism or even dare to write books, but, except for one or two small things that were thrust upon me, I studiously avoided writing for fear of doing it badly. To do other things badly was distressing, but endurable ; to write badly then seemed intolerable. In a diary of May 1887 I find the significant entry :

“ I am following my usual device of doing a hateful and difficult thing for the object of avoiding a more difficult and hateful, which, in this case, is writing. How I tremble and grow cold at the thought of trying to write—to write and publish for money ! ”

It is amazing, but that hideous distress of mind was almost continuous. On May 22, 1888, I wrote :

“ Read a lot of stuff about Schiller, with growing dissatisfaction, that left me hopelessly melancholy all night. I shall never do anything worth the doing now. No faith, no hope, no charity left. All is swallowed up in vague ambition, for which I cannot even fix the object. Was haunted by bright

visions of Jena and other places again. This seems a regular accompaniment of my melancholy. If anyone is taught by experience I ought to be, for I have made every mistake a man can make. Old age and experience tell me I have been a fool my whole life long. I have been led by passions and blinded ; worn my heart on my sleeve ; revelled in error and obscurity ; and there is no health in me. But my enthusiasm used to be genuine, and my admiration passionate. Thought long of my lost friend at night, and in early morning had rather beautiful dreams, which I forget, though one was a conversation with Pericles."

Through all those melancholy years I found only one road of escape—the escape from London. I then began the pensive habit of all-night walks, starting late on Saturday and walking on and on till Sunday evening, when one might hope to sleep. Tourists in Switzerland used to make a fussy adventure of getting up in a hotel to see the sun rise, but I have never known anyone beside myself who knew what joy it is to pass through the Surrey woods at night, or along the Chiltern Hills, and listen to the almost silent noises of creatures moving in the leaves ; to watch the stars setting without a word ; to smell the morning just approaching ; to hear the lark suddenly declare the day ; to feel in one's eyes the pleasure of browns reappearing among the blues and blacks ; and at last, after many hours of gradual glory, to behold the sun. Such vigils were fine loopholes for escape from London's charnel-house, but the escape was brief. Finer because longer was the redemption of walking away for days together ; westward, following the sun, if possible, but in any direction provided that the path led away from London. On those occasions of exquisite relief, I found the anguish of mental indigestion, which had almost become habitual, suddenly, as from a draught of elixir, relax its clutch at the mere sight of the train which was to carry me away to some starting-point beyond the suburbs. With

unimaginable delight, I thus plodded on foot through wide regions of England, Wales, and the Scottish Lowlands, sometimes with a friend, far more often, and always better, alone.

In September 1888 I happened in my wanderings to meet again a famous man. After reading the chapter in Ruskin's *Præterita*, called "L'Hôtel du Mont Blanc," I went to Sallanches in the French Alps, and in the old Belle Vue Inn there I was horribly disturbed every morning at first light by someone in the next room creaking about with noisy feet. As there was an attendant or valet who dined with us in the evening, I took my plaguey neighbour for a lord, perhaps insane, and cursed him at random. One day I was talking to "the keeper" at dinner when the conversation turned on Carlyle's country. Whereupon "the keeper" told me he had held Carlyle's cup while he drank tea, so feeble had the old man become, and then I said, "I'm afraid Ruskin will be the next to go." "I never knew him so well for years," the amazing "keeper" replied. "Haven't you seen him?" "Very often in old days," I said. "I mean here—now," he answered; "I am with him here." So my crazy lord was Ruskin himself, and in the morning when awakened by those creaking boots, I did not say one single damn. Next day that trusty servant, Baxter, brought an invitation for Margaret Nevinston and myself, and I wrote that evening :

"He came to meet us with words of thanks, a little bit *empressés* ; I mean there was something almost religiously solemn in his thanks (for a lot of cyclamen), as though we were in church or at a deathbed—eyes turned down and voice subdued (no doubt in the effort to conceal boredom). But he recovered himself at once, and I noticed it again only for a moment as we came away. He looked much older than in Oxford ten years ago. [A minute description of his appearance follows.] We were looking across the fertile valley to the red precipices of Varens, which rose sheer opposite the window, and he said there was no place like Sallanches for

beauty and sublimity combined. 'And yet,' I said, 'hardly a soul comes here to stay.' 'Very few people have souls,' he answered, 'and those that have are generally ambitious and want to climb heights. Hardly anyone cares about beauty. If people did, they wouldn't build London or pull down Paris.'

"He paused, and as though to correct exaggeration, then went on: 'There are, of course, good people still, but they spend all their time in undoing the harm that the others have done. They go nursing, or reforming the East End, or teaching *crétins*, while the healthy and hopeful are neglected. The other day there was a woman singing here about the street with a lovely voice. But her only song was all about "Liberté, Liberté," and that sort of thing. I asked her what she knew of Liberty and tried to get her to sing some of the other songs in the book she was selling, such as "La Rosière," but I found she did not know any, and could not read.'

"I said something about the melancholy of the mountain people. 'Yes,' he answered, 'the people are gloomy and no wonder. They are neglected and left to themselves, and not allowed to see or hear anything. There are no gentry in the country; they have all swarmed into the towns to make money. The peasants have a very hard time, especially in such seasons as this, and now there is so much disease among the vines.' He became a little depressed, and continued in tones more subdued and regretful: 'The country does not grow what it used to. The whole climate' (I think he meant of Europe) 'is becoming damper, and I only wish God would provide us with better means of resisting it. The snow on Mont Blanc is not so deep as it used to be. It comes lower down the sides, but is thin, and the top is growing bare.'

"'Yesterday,' he continued more cheerfully, 'we were on the road out there (towards Combloux and Megève) and saw the great moraine that once stretched from Mont Blanc to

Geneva and the Jura. As it receded, it left the greatest blocks just there, by the Combloux road. We measured some.' He appealed to Detmar Blow, the architect, who was with him, for the exact sizes, which were given. He then described the vegetation—'very rich, as it always is on granite'—and went on to speak of various friends, such as Sydney Cockerell—'a very remarkable young man, so sweet and thoughtful, and of high scientific power too. If he had been here he would have filled the whole place with shells by now.'

"'Yes,' he said again, as though aroused from despondency by the thought of friends. 'There are still good people in the world, though they generally overwork—or overwalk themselves. So yesterday you walked up to the Col de Voza and back—a long way. I wish I could walk as far now. By walking you can get to places where no carriage or mule can take you. That's the best of it.'"

He went on to speak of St. Martin (the little village just across the beautiful old bridge over the Arve, where that Hôtel du Mont Blanc had been)—"not much changed since his boyhood; even the inn capable of repair"—and of various other subjects. We took our leave, and in the afternoon we saw the slight and stooping figure enter a carriage and drive across to St. Martin so as to follow the old and beautiful road to Chamonix, where, a day or two later, he wrote the Epilogue to the final edition of *Modern Painters*. Those days were to be the last of full life for him, though he remained in the world nearly twelve years longer nominally alive.

CHAPTER V

PURGATION

THE NEXT FEW YEARS—say from the last month of 1891 to the third month of 1897—were for me, as for so many people in that variegated age of English life, a period of strangely vivid interests and strangely diverse pursuits. We were simultaneously, and almost equally, attracted by the soldier, enthusiastic for the rebel, clamorous for the poor, and devoted to the beautiful. Some of us were moved most by one of these incitements, some by another ; but many, like myself, were moved by all four together, and we recognised no contradiction in the objects of our admiration or desire. The apparent contradictions were reconciled in a renewed passion—a glowing intensity—of life as we issued from the rather chilly rationalism and moralising of former years. People who do not remember that remarkable age, or who never lived in its centre, easily dismiss the 'nineties as "decadent" ; and there was, certainly, a small set which cultivated Decadence as an alluring pose. Decadence implies the weariness that comes of satiety, especially of satiety in sensual pleasures, and some enjoy being regarded as the languorous victims of excessive sensual experience. Satiety drives to the exploration of untried emotions, no matter how perverse, and it was natural for the satiated, in Walter Pater's words, " to catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seemed by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend." Since our time is short, and the number of our pulses

counted, let us clutch the joy of the moment—the *monochronos hedoné*—and for the moment feel again a new thrill, reviving the excitement which habit had glutted to stupefaction. If that search was vain, other dark avenues must be drawn by the questing hounds of desire ; for there are many coverts accessible to man, and in one or other of them the new ecstasy must surely lurk.

That was the spirit of Decadence, as we followed or laughed at it in the early 'nineties. But it never spread very far, for it was possible only among well-to-do and literary classes, and most people then, as always, were either poor or busy, or both. For the poor or the busy the ordinary pleasures of mankind suffice when they can get them, nor are their pleasures ever likely to be so habitual as to satiate. Most of us, though either poor or busy or both, felt, indeed, an amused interest in the Decadents, and were much moved by the beauty of their finest art in words and illustration. Most of us deplored and indignantly condemned the atrocious fate of Oscar Wilde, for whom many, like myself, would gladly have offered bail, if, like Stewart Headlam, we could have raised the £1,000 demanded. But Decadence fell with Wilde in the very middle of the 'nineties (April 1895) and both before and after the hideous event we regarded our life in that epoch rather as a Renaissance than as a Decadence. To us it was a time of adventure and life renewed. Those years of infinitely varied experiment were illuminated for us by all manner of strange and wandering lights, but by some that were steadfast though old, and by some steadfast though new—all manner of wandering lights, comets, shooting meteors, fire-flies, will-o'-the-wisps, and churchyard candles—but new stars also and the constellations to which Ulysses set his helm. The beautiful phenomena of heaven, like Dante ascending out of Hell's darkness by hidden ways, I too perceived as through a rounded aperture. Nor did my Guide and I take any rest, but climbed up together, my Guide first and I second, until we

came out into the upper world whence I could see the stars again.

I was enabled to shake off the hampering burden of teaching chiefly through the friendship of Captain John Sinclair, late of the 5th Lancers (afterwards Lord Pentland and Governor of Madras), who had conceived the idea of the London Playing Fields Committee for providing cricket, tennis and football grounds among clubs which could just afford the bare cost of upkeep. He had me appointed secretary, Edward Chandos Leigh, the Speaker's Counsel, being chairman, and for about six years I managed the society with some success.

And I certainly did learn a good deal. I learnt what a large number of educated and busy Englishmen there are who give up time to sit on committees and control societies in which they have no interest beyond their personal liking for the subjects, or their sense of social obligation. I learnt how much pleasanter and more useful it is to work with educated and sensitive men than with the dull and insensate, and it has since seemed to me possible that the word "gentleman" may have a distinct meaning and value ; even, alas ! as something different from "Nature's gentleman." For among people of the other kind, the ill-manners, suspicions, and utter refusal to believe that anyone would not make money out of a public society if he possibly could, were a perpetual hindrance and irritation. That suspicious and insensitive temper has, I think, been the weakness hitherto in many "democratic" movements, partly because sixpence has, unhappily, meant so much more to the members than it would to people of higher education and probably greater possessions. My experience on one or two occasions taught me to sympathise very keenly with the suffering of all who serve the vulgar, and of anyone who lies at their mercy. I also learnt a good deal about cart horses, kinds of soil and grass, the rent and purchase of freehold, the rustic speech of groundmen and the art of land-surveying, so that at sight

I could judge acreage almost to the yard. And it pleased me to go cycling about to every quarter of London, looking after the grounds, conciliating irritated claimants, and watching the young barbarians all at play. I met with some opposition, it is true, especially from moralists who objected to open spaces of every kind, because, as a notable sportsman and great landowner told me, "Immorality was all very well in its proper place—in its proper place—but not upon public commons." But as a whole the sporting, cricketing and idle classes stood by us, and I became acquainted with a good many of them, as with W. G. Grace, who sometimes put his valuable signature to letters I had composed. After one of my meetings with him (June 4, 1894) I wrote :

"W. G. came in—solid, vast, enormous in the shoulders, ruddy and clear-skinned ; thick, black beard just touched with grey ; he is just beginning to swell too much in the wrong place ; clear eyes, rather oblique like a Chinaman's, and high cheekbones ; a rough, good-tempered manner, a fine specimen of man, and all his powers spent on knocking balls about ! What might he not have done a thousand years ago ! "

The work was supposed to take only half my time, but it is a safe precept never to accept a half-time job, for it is impossible to regulate a day's work by halves. Still I secured a good deal of leisure, and very timidly began writing sketches and articles for the fine and confused assortment of Bunting's *Contemporary Review* (moderate Liberal), the *St. James's Gazette* (immoderate Tory), and *Freedom* (immoderate Communist-Anarchist, unpaid). With punctual energy I continued to drill my Cadet Company near Shadwell Basin, and a little account of one of our field-days at Aldershot, which appeared in the *St. James's Gazette*, somehow attracted the attention of J. W. Arrowsmith, the Bristol publisher, who wrote asking if I could not do him a bookful of similar

sketches. My acquaintance with East End life was then many years old, but I began increasing it in various ways. In the first place, I went hopping with the crowd at Marden in Kent, and wallowed about in the slough of their encampments ; for it was a wet season and the pickers were filthy and ragged. The swarming children were always dressed in their elders' clothes, cut down anyhow and extended to double service—a skirt serving both as bodice and skirt, and trousers as coat besides. Through the garments of all the pickers the dirty flesh kept peering out in the most unusual places, and the invariable smell of dirty poverty, mingled with the pungent smell of withering hops, pervaded the whole gardens. The farm I worked on was said to have yielded £35,000 the year before, hops selling in the Borough at £15 a pocket (about 10 bushels). An industrious family of man, wife, and children would take home about £5 to £7 in the end, working under very definite regulations, and never picking during rain or the funeral of a picker.

For a time also I lodged in Arbour Square off the Commercial Road, and often attended the neighbouring Thames Police Court, then presided over by John Dickinson, an excellent Magistrate, before whom I had the honour in Bow Street of being brought up at a later period of his career, when I received a well deserved lecture, and gave him a still better one in return. Sometimes, too, I went round with the rent-collectors ; once at least with Augusta Butcher, who afterwards married and was drowned with her husband in the Wye. In 1893 she was a woman of singular beauty—"like a lovely autumn day," I wrote, "all the wild grace of Ireland in her crown of hair and red-brown eyes." She had completely won the heart of the tenants, and they paid their rents as though they were bringing free gifts of frankincense and myrrh. The rooms in Catherine Buildings, where she collected, then ran from 5s. a week for two, or 2s. 9d. for one large, down to 1s. 6d. for one small.

About the same time (1893) I began a pleasant habit of

cruising down the Thames and up the Medway to Rochester, or around the Thames estuary, till my knowledge of those waters was intimate and peculiar. Once or twice I rowed down in an outriggered four, an exciting voyage when many steamers were raising storms on the water. Sometimes I sailed with an Irish friend who kept a little boat, just big enough for two, somewhere near Queenborough. But I liked best to board a great sailing barge from Wapping Old Stairs and go quietly down with the tide, tying up for the night off Gravesend, and making Rochester in the morning. Perhaps I was the first to give the touch of romance to those beautiful red-sailed barges. For my story, *The St. George of Rochester*, was written in 1893, and it must have been romantic, for the most beautiful of women said to one of the plainest, "We ought to be very grateful to Mr. Nevinson for showing us what to do when we get into a scrape"; and the beautiful heroine of the barge certainly had got into a scrape! But, romance apart, the life on those barges was to me one of intense interest, mainly for the simple character of the men, and the exact routine of their essential work.

Supplied with a knowledge of East End life gradually absorbed through many years, I wrote the book of East London stories called *Neighbours of Ours*. Arrowsmith kept it hanging about for eleven months before publication (January 1895), thus allowing Arthur Morrison's *Mean Streets*, treating of similar subjects, to beat us by a neck, with the result that mine was praised, and his was bought. Still mine had the kind of success I least expected; for though most of the stories are comedies, thought "rather daring" in those days for subject and language, they were heartily welcomed by people of serious knowledge, such as Samuel Barnett, Octavia Hill, Ernest Aves, and Charles Gore, afterwards Bishop of Birmingham and of Oxford, who actually invited me to his "evenings" in Westminster on the strength of them.

Equally significant, and leading to further result, was the

approval of William Robertson Nicoll, then well known as editor of the *British Weekly*, and the *Bookman*; also as "Claudius Clear," "A Man of Kent," and perhaps other pseudonyms. At first he was flattering beyond bounds; said he found in me the "heart" and "faith" that people liked; urged me not to rein in my feelings, but just for this once, if I would write for him, "to wallow in the pathetic"; above all, to be "tender" and end on a note of rest. I told him it was all in vain; that I had no faith and little heart, and could never be tender. Yet even after my Staffordshire stories had begun to appear in the *British Weekly*, with disastrous effect upon its readers, he kindly continued to urge me to change my nature, promising that I should write the most popular book of the time if only I would follow his advice and eschew "the cruel harshness which leaves the mind gloomy and our aspect of mankind worse than before." He declared that one of the stories ("An Undesired Victory"), which I had thought almost sentimentally sweet and even religious, had reminded him only of *Germinal*, and had most grievously offended his readers. So it went on for a time, till at last his disapproval and the danger to the paper became so emphatic that we parted with mutual consent, and greater esteem on my side than on his. For he told me my last story had created horrible disturbance, and had proved to him that I had taken my brutal and cynical line and would never leave it, whereas "we agree to drop that ugly side of life now, or to keep it only for death-bed scenes." Upon which obscure utterance I withdrew to meditate. And my chief consolation for the inevitable rupture has been that a stranger once forwarded to me a letter from a parson long resident in the Black Country, saying that he always kept my collection of these stories, called *In the Valley of Tophet*, by his side, because they alone had introduced the light of human love and sweetness into that abandoned region. After all, it is as good a reward as writing the most popular book of the time, though not so lucrative either to myself or a publisher.

I was drawn to the Black Country chiefly by repulsion, for one always likes to see things at their worst, and I had long known the Black Country as the deadliest region of England. In the same spirit, I had the previous year (1894), visited the Workhouse Schools around London so as to realise what education at its worst might be, and there certainly I saw the system of charitable State Institutions operating as one might expect it to operate. At least, I hope that nothing which a State does could be worse. When in the Black Country, I lodged in an absolutely bare room with an old woman who made nails all day at her little stiddy for a "fogger" at Cradley (pronounced Craidley) Heath, and was chiefly paid in miserable "Tommy-truck" from his shop, he refusing to supply the iron rods unless she accepted the stuff. Associating day and night with nail-workers, iron-workers, and coal-miners, I learnt a good deal about their habits, and I found their view of life was not a cheering view. It provided little of that tenderness and few of those moments of rest which Robertson Nicoll required for his soothing stories. I already knew the Sunderland coal-pits, and the conditions of life in the neighbouring villages there. But in the Black Country the pits were worse organised, and the conditions above ground more wretched. In those days the whole district was neglected and appeared to be decaying. The great pottery works, it is true, were doing full time. The chain-makers of Cradley Heath were hammering the huge links for anchor chains, women toiling at the work in scanty covering. But the nail-makers were threatened by the machine-made nail; one great iron foundry was closed during that year (1895), and seven hundred hands were thrown out; and the miners had no power of union like the miners I had known in the North. Poverty, uncertainty and depression lay upon the district, heavy and dull as its own smoke. Still a boosy cheerfulness recurred at the "Wakes," and the men found relaxation in whippet-racing, pigeon-flying, and leaping with weights—to me a marvellous

performance ; for a man swinging an iron weight like a dumb-bell in each hand would take two short leaps first, without any run, and then a long leap, dropping the weights and clearing as many as eight kitchen chairs set in a row.

It was partly this increasing knowledge of the working people, partly a deep and lasting friendship with a very remarkable member of the Anarchist group, but chiefly my abhorrence of the State and all its detestable enormities, that made me intimate with the Anarchists during these years. Among comfortable people there was then the same kind of panic about Anarchists as there is now about Bolsheviks, though no resemblance in their doctrines can be found. In their Party I formed a friendship lasting for many years with two remarkable people : Louise Michel and Peter Kropotkin. "The Red Virgin" was conspicuous at nearly all the meetings—conspicuous in ancient black, always worn to commemorate her fellow Communards pitilessly slaughtered in Paris (1871) to glut the bloodthirst of the bourgeoisie, who, crowding around the slaughter-house with jeers and laughter, stood to witness the executions in mass. Old black bonnet, shaped like the Salvation Army bonnet and flung anyhow on top of the wild and copious grey hair ; old black shawl ; long black dress ; and, making one forget dress and age and all, the thin, white face, lined with mingled enthusiasm and humour ; prominent nose and receding chin, high and receding forehead, and under it keen grey eyes, eagerly peering out upon the world with rage, humorous pity, and gentleness strangely combined. She always spoke in French, her quiet and monotonous voice just rising and falling, sweet and low as the summer sea. "*Ne cadencez pas, monsieur, ne cadencez pas!*" she used constantly to say to me in her vain attempts to teach me her beautiful language ; but her own cadence was regular and inevitable as the waves. "I am growing old," she said at the beginning of one of her greatest speeches, "and as I grow old I learn to have patience."

Peter Kropotkin I met first at the Autonomy Club in 1891. Anarchists do not have a chairman, but when enough of us had assembled, a man stood up and began to speak. His pronunciation was peculiar until one grew accustomed to it. "Own" rhymed with "town," "law" was "low," and "the sluffter fields of Europe" became a kindly joke among us. On that occasion he started with the sentence "Our first step must be the abolition of all low." I felt no exaggerated devotion to the law, but, as a first step, its abolition seemed to me rather a long jump. Without a pause Kropotkin continued speaking, rapidly, but with the difficulty of a foreigner who has to translate rushing thoughts as he goes along. His purpose, as usual, was to expose the absurdity and brutality of State legislation and State control. His examples were drawn from the bureaucracies of Russia and France; for in those days, long before the war, bureaucracy had not yet bridled this country. And besides, though he naturally knew Russia best, he knew France as well, since, at the behest of the Tsar, he had long been imprisoned at Clairvaux, and only lately released owing to the expostulations of writers and men of science throughout Europe.

He was then about fifty, but he looked more. The great dome of his head was already bald. His face was battered and crinkled into an india-rubber softness, partly due to loss of teeth through prison-scurvy. His unrestrained and bushy beard was touched with the white that was soon to overcome its reddish brown. But eternal youth suffused his speech and stature. His mind was always going full gallop, like a horse that sometimes stumbles in its eagerness. Behind his spectacles his grey eyes gleamed with invincible benevolence. And yet there lived a contradiction in the figure of the man, for there was nothing soft or tender about that. The broad shoulders, the deep chest, the erect carriage and straight back revealed the military training of his youth.

Kropotkin's method of work was peculiar, and, to an orderly Englishman, embarrassing. During the appalling

period of Russian reaction (it seemed appalling then, though we have since seen how readily other Governments can equal its horrors)—during that ghastly persecution of all freedom's advocates under Nicholas II and Stolypin in 1908 and 1909, whilst Tolstoy was issuing his pamphlet, *I Cannot be Silent*, Kropotkin was writing his book called *The Terror in Russia* and as I had been out during the abortive revolutions of 1905 and the two following years, he asked me to help him in getting the subject into order. Order was his difficulty. He knew so much, thought so much, felt so much, it seemed impossible for him to keep within limits. Writing at great speed, he poured out sheet after sheet of straggling manuscript. Then omissions occurred to him—dozens of omissions. With strange devices of flying lines, loops, brackets, and circles he struggled to get them in. He was constantly altering his arrangement, never sure in what sequence the statements or reflections ought to come. Loose leaves were scribbled over, and we had to tuck them into the manuscript as best we could. No one reading that book could imagine what a turmoil of confusion it went through before it emerged perfectly clear and clean and trim as it stands.

I saw him last on his seventieth birthday, in December 1912. I had just come from the scene of the Balkan War, and we naturally talked of wars. He already expected the overwhelming disaster that was so soon to fall upon Europe, and when it came he certainly welcomed it. For I suppose he was the only rational man in the world who sincerely believed it was "a war to end war." His faith in humanity was inexhaustible, and he welcomed the Russian Revolution of March 1917 with the same enthusiastic hope. Unhappily, he lived to see both these hopes frustrated. Perhaps he retained too fond a faith in the unity and fundamental goodness of mankind, as he expounded them in his *Mutual Aid*. He never fully realised how incalculably lower than the angels we remain.

An Anarchist of equal attraction and almost equal fame whom I began to know in those years was Edward Carpenter. It was not until a good deal later in life that I became intimate with that exquisite writer and lovable personality, whom I have since always met as one of my truest and most admired friends, though the intervals between our meetings have often been wide. I had known him before by sight, and like all the youngish people of those days, I had been deeply stirred by his early books. But it was in October 1896, that I heard him first. He was speaking at St. Martin's Town Hall upon new ideas in science, and a big crowd came to hear him, including Sydney Olivier, Henry Salt, Fred Evans, Mrs. N. F. Dryhurst, and almost the whole gang of our rebellious intellectual leaders and their following. The description I wrote of him that evening needs little alteration to-day to suit his appearance in later life :

“ He is certainly a very beautiful and attractive person ; tall and slim and fairly straight ; loose hair, and beard just grizzled ; strong, dark eyebrows, dark eyes, hooked nose, and thin cheeks of palish brown ; the whole face very like Carlyle at forty-five—a Carlyle fined-down and ‘ cultured ’ ; he has one little trick of licking his thumb ; was dressed in loose greys, with a blue shirt, and tie in a large bow ; a voice soft but strong enough without effort ; spoke from a few notes and went slowly ahead in almost perfect grammar ; and with apparent composure, only checked by an occasional flutter as of failing breath ; not many ‘ points,’ and hardly any laughter ; perhaps a conscious avoidance of such things. His main purpose was to show that Science, owing to its limitation, is apt to leave out many vital sides. The study of it should teach increased perception like that of savages ; it should be intellectual, but also dwell on the moral or emotional relations of the object to ourselves. The study of medicine, for instance, should not be of drugs but of health, until the body becomes so pure as to be conscious of

its internal states and changes, as certain Indians are."

To some it may seem strange that all this time I was working hard to acquire further military knowledge, was drilling my little company with unfailing regularity, was attending the officers' training drills with the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards, was organising camps and supplies, diligently investigating the German Army's methods, and even attending their great Imperial manoeuvres upon the left bank of the Rhine, following their drill, inspecting their barracks, and nearly causing international complications in my zeal to test their food. This labour was partly due to a vague intention of becoming a war correspondent, if ever I got a chance; and with this object I also learnt riding in one of the London schools. But this military enthusiasm belonged to the spirit of the time, inspired partly by the writings of Rudyard Kipling, Stevenson, and Henley, but chiefly by ignorance of war. We were something like those young Athenians whom Thucydides describes as ignorant of war and therefore a-tiptoe with excitement at the prospect of it. I remember offending my Socialist and Anarchist friends one evening by declaring I should not care to live in a world in which there was no war. Well, we have had our bellyful now, and many millions have not lived, whether they cared to nor not.

But it was nor merely martial ardour that led me to the great change in life which I was then approaching. The change was at least equally due to what was one of the happiest events in an existence which, on the whole, has been happy—my first visit to Greece in 1894.

I could hardly then believe that the land of Greece still existed. My first sight of it as we entered the amethyst Gulf of Corinth overwhelmed me with unequalled joy, and for the next three weeks I lived like one transported into joyful dreams. I knew nothing of modern Greece, her politics, her trade, or her population, and I cared nothing. I hardly observed that she was inhabited by living people, except

when, as in Arcadia and upon the plains around Thebes, I found traces of the ancient Greek dress and manners. But to me the whole of the land—that most lovely land, so abundant in colour, so conformable in scale and free from monstrous and inhuman exaggeration of mountain or sea—was far more than any Paradise could be ; for every stone and clod of its brilliant surface was consecrated by the noblest memories in all the history of man. We reached Athens late at night, but I went straight, without a moment's doubt, through the new town and some crooked little streets right up to the foot of the great rock on which the Acropolis was dimly visible, hanging grey as a ghost against the stars. I clambered up the rough ground till I came to the steps of the Prophylæa, but was stopped at its first arch by a great iron gate which I shook in vain. Inside, the temples stood silent and pale. Marvellously tall they looked in the darkness. A dog barked at me from some hut beside the Parthenon, and three or four owls kept screaming their lamentations. I wandered down along the south front of the rock by steep paths choked with a chaos of ruins, and at last came to a modern road leading to the height overlooking the region of the ancient town from which now and again a melancholy singing issued.

Almost every minute of those few weeks was filled with delight, but one walk I may notice especially, again copying my diary nearly word for word, and lingering over it only for the sake of the few who still worship the ancient gods.

George Bruce was again my companion, strong as a young bull, though to me never so savage. Leaving Athens and passing through Corinth and the splendid mountain route between Sicyon territory and Argolis, we came to Mycenæ, the Lion Gate, the tomb of Agamemnon, and all the tragic scene where the doomed prophetess heard the wailing of murdered children upon the wind. Making a long circuit to visit some little green tents I espied on a hilltop, we found Charles Waldstein, then excavating the Heræon, holy

shrine of Argos. By his direction we plunged down through deep village roads haunted by packs of savage dogs, and, fording a river, arrived in Argos at night. Next day was Independence Day, and we wandered about the old theatre, where one could imagine the *Agamemnon* performed before an audience knowing every inch of the ground and every point of the story.

By train we proceeded south across part of the Argive Plain and, turning suddenly west, wound slowly up a mountain gorge with a good deal of thick, brown water in it. So by a long curve we ascended to the broad, rich valley between Nestané and Parthenion, passing one beautiful village that hangs in terraces on its north side. Circling this by long loops, we climbed the very side of old Parthenion, where poor, neglected, comforting Pan was seen of the heroic runner, and, in fact, we circled almost round his mountain. The country is just such as would delight him—deep ravines all rocky and covered with olive, arbutus, and tiny myrtles, scrub of juniper and yellow broom, innumerable flowers springing between the stones, and sometimes large patches of grass. There are hardly any paths or roads except the main road from Argolis into Arcadia, but I saw many flocks of goats and sheep with their shepherd—tall and dignified men in huge white cloaks of goat's hair with hoods, and red handkerchiefs knotted round their heads. Their life must be solitary and changeless—nothing to do or think of all day but the care of the flock. Hardly a woman is seen anywhere in this region, but one little shepherdess ran barefoot over stones and thorns after our train as it climbed the steep, and seated herself quite comfortably on one of the buffers behind, till we reached the summit. Thence we could see the great mountains, the beginnings of Parnon and others which bar the way into Laconia. As we rounded the west side of Parthenion, we came into the great central tableland of Arcadia—a wet marshy plain, cold and grey and cheerless, that evening, but fat and fruitful with moisture, bearing

wheat and maize and currants, and divided among prosperous villages ; though, indeed, they had a bare and gaunt look, like a northern mining town. On the left, quite close to us, Tegea must have stood, defying Sparta. On the right, some way off, was Mantinea upon its battle plain, hidden by a great mountain of rock. So we reached Tripolis, and wandered far out to trace the road that creeps across the hills and down into the Eurotas Valley to Sparta—Sparta unvisited.

Next day, having old Tegea on the left, the road led over open country where the trees and bushes were all covered with brilliant blossom, white and red, and the peasants were coming in for the Tripolis market, each family like Abraham and his wife—all white and shining on their mules or ponies ; the women in their robes and best ornaments, with head-dresses especially beautiful. Gradually ascending across a high tableland, we came to a pass, from the top of which we saw a great snowy mountain far away, due south. I asked a man its name, and the answer came clear and ready, “ Ta-yg-e-tos ! ” That was a great moment of life.

The path led down to another rich plain, very swampy, with a shallow lake at one end ; thence over a great mountain spur of Simberou, from which I thought I could discern the Plain of Sparta itself. But a thunderstorm and drenching rain closed the view, and through a deluge of mud we struggled on for many hours towards Megalopolis, passing one mountain village, where a fine stock of dark women, dressed in noble rags of white robes, were selling snails by the sackful to a sharp and smiling youth. From Megalopolis a real road was then being slowly made past Karytaina, where a town stands nobly over the great gorge that turns the Alpheus west from north. A Frankish castle is piled high on its rock, which falls sheer on all sides but one. The town, with deep, shady verandahs, basks up the side of the rock almost to the castle’s foot ; it is like an Italian mediæval

place, with a look even of Spain, and the castle almost Arthurian in romance. The Alpheus, rushing under a beautiful old bridge at the entrance of the gorge was yellow that day, being in flood. The road was being continued to Andritsaina by long curves round the skirts of Mount Lycaon, a natural home of Pan, who protects the flock from wolves.

Who would not fight for such a land, or serve it in any capacity—the beautiful land where, for one brief century the genius of mankind stood on the topmost rung of its climax? My opportunity came soon. In the year after my first visit to Greece, Abdul Hamid began his series of Armenian massacres, increasing in atrocity during the following year. A good many English people felt uneasy, dimly remembering that, less than twenty years before, their country had pledged herself to the protection of Armenia, and though Lord Rosebery assured them that the obligations of a treaty could never be expected to last twenty years, they remained uncomfortable. Even Lord Salisbury warned the Sultan that he must set his house in order, and public meetings of the usual protesting character, passing the usual resolutions, began to be held. When, towards the end of 1896, the Greeks rose in Crete, and the Turks attempted to stamp out their demand for independence in the customary manner, indignation increased; and when Colonel Vassos conveyed a battalion and a half of Greek regulars to support the insurgents, enthusiasm rose high. Early in 1897 (February 16) I went to the Byron Society to propose the formation of a British volunteer force to fight for Greece, and was told that no such proposal had yet been made. I wrote to Metaxas, the Greek Minister or *Chargé d’Affaires*, and was politely thanked for my “philhellenic sentiments.” More meetings were held, and nothing done. A fresh body, called the “Liberal Forwards,” appeared, led by G. W. F. Russell and Herbert Torr, with the support of Dr. Clifford and even of Charles Gore, Canon of Westminster. On

March 5 a great meeting assembled in Queen's Hall, and I went there, timidly resolved to force my proposal. At the end of the first resolution, condemning the Unspeakable One with accustomed unanimity, I stood upon my chair in the middle of the arena and tried to suggest action in place of words. The whole audience rose against me with howls of rage. Partly it was misunderstanding, because they did not allow me to be heard. Partly it was the startled indignation of people well used to believe that, when a resolution has been passed, all has been accomplished. At that time, too, one often heard a pious appeal to the text, "Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord," and, in leaving further action to a Higher Power, an obvious solution was favoured which seemed at once secure, inevitable, and cheap.

So I was dragged down by the stewards (my first experience of that treatment), but as I continued to shout my proposal amid increasing turmoil, Russell told me to write it on paper. He read the note himself and passed it on, as being merely a suggestion, to Metaxas, who took no notice. Perhaps both were afraid of the Foreign Enlistment Act. I thought nothing would be done.

But I was wrong. In the next few days the "Liberal Forwards" under Herbert Torr began enlisting for a British Legion, and revealed to me a plan for starting from Brindisi in open boats and landing somewhere "on the coast of Macedonia," (I suppose they meant Epirus). Captain Cullum Birch, an ex-regular officer, was suggested for command, and perhaps it was he who dissuaded them from so crazy an adventure. On Sunday, March 14, hearing that he and one or two others were starting next day for Athens, I determined to go at all costs. That afternoon, Vaughan Nash took me to the National Liberal Club, which I had then never entered, owing to my Conservative tastes and Revolutionary convictions. There he introduced me to H. W. Massingham, editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, which in the

previous year or two he had raised to the height of perturbing power, and it was he and his paper that inspired the more Quixotic or enthusiastic of the pro-Greek partisans. Within half a minute he asked me to write him letters from the front, if war should be declared. I instantly accepted, and in less than sixty seconds the whole course of my life was changed. On St. Patrick's Day, 1897, I sailed again for Greece.

CHAPTER VI

THE THIRTY DAYS' WAR

SINCE THOSE DAYS I have become so accustomed to travelling with some definite and difficult object that I could hardly now enjoy a journey for enjoyment, but on this, my first adventure, anxiety as to my chance of fulfilling the task before me obscured all other thoughts. At all the stations along the route from Patras to Athens there was much shouting and excitement, chiefly in enthusiastic greeting to a party of the "Garibaldians," who had come to fight for Greek Liberty, equipped only with breeches, red shirts, and rifles. During the campaign the poor fellows suffered horribly from hunger and cold—so horribly that in sheer coxcombry of charity, as Lamb called it, I gave one of them my spare shirt, and was myself reduced almost to their wretched condition; and all to no purpose, for what was one shirt among a thousand frozen men? They were under the nominal command of the distinguished anarchist Cipriani, to whom I had verbal introductions; but unhappily he was always fast asleep when I found him. In Athens I was generously received by Henry Norman, at that time assistant editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, and an ardent supporter of the Greek cause.

Ignorant of war, Athens stood a-tiptoe with excitement, as Thucydides, in a passage before referred to, says she stood at the beginning of her war with Sparta. Every hour the newsboys raced screaming through the streets. In every café the home-staying orators thundered exhortations to the brave. In front of the Palace, King George himself declared his intention of leading the troops and dying, if needs must,

upon the Plains of Thessaly ; whither he never attempted to go, being reserved for another fate. At ten o'clock, protesting that they had never in their lives been out before noon, the Athenian ladies, as like Parisians as fashion plates could make them, drove down to the Peiræus to ladle soup into pitchers for Cretan refugees. Scores of families were lodged in the National Schools there, the long classrooms being divided up by the school desks and benches into little pens, like a well-organised sheep fair, and each pen made into a separate family's home. It was my first experience of refugees, and all over the port and city to their various covers I accompanied Colonel Le Mesurier, an old Indian soldier, who spoke no word of Greek, but diffused comfort and jollity by a resonant military voice.

On hearing that Massingham had telegraphed asking me to act as his regular war correspondent, I set off for Thessaly, in a filthy little steamer bound for Volo on the Pagasæan Gulf, home of Achilles and the Argonauts. From the beautiful town of Volo, above which Pelion and Ossa stand piled, with Olympus glimmering in snow far away to the north, we crossed the Plain of Thessaly, suited for corn, and rich if only the waters flowing down from Pindus were distributed over it. So we came to Larissa, where the Crown Prince ("Tino") was received in state by guns, infantry, and a cavalry escort, which remained mounted to its own satisfaction. Here also I met for the first time J. B. Atkins (then for the *Manchester Guardian*), so attractive, so generous ; Bertram Christian afterwards so well known to me (then for *The Times*) ; and David Hogarth, already my friend as the "Travelling Scholar in the Levant," and I think the only man in Larissa who had any true foresight of impending disaster ; though even I, in spite of all my hopes, was uneasy with foreboding as I walked over the Peneus bridge and along the white road to Tyrnavos, so soon to become the scene of historic rout. For it was there that "Tino" received his baptism of flight.

Next day I received, or suggested, orders to traverse the whole of the frontier unless war came, and then, if I possibly could, to cross Pindus into Arta and the west. Here, as so often in various enterprises, my bounden duty coincided most happily with my desire ; for, with my sole equipment of a little knapsack and a coat, I set off at noon across the burning plain for the Vale of Tempe, and that evening I walked right down it to the flattish delta made by the Peneus as it issues into the Gulf of Salonika. In those days that lovely valley was still undefiled by railway or other touch of civilisation. It was still much the same as when Apollo haunted it, and his sacred path led from there to Delphi. Ancient plane trees of enormous girth shrouded the entrance, growing beside the Peneus, which is here about the size of the Severn at Shrewsbury, but even more rapid, and thick brown with mud. On each side of the stream lower down, the foot-hills of Ossa on the one hand and of Olympus on the other rise in precipices to a great height, generally grey as in Dovedale, but sometimes deeply tinged with red. Besides the immemorial planes, the ilex grows in plenty, always gloomy, being the only tree to give its wood to make the cross of Christ. When I came within sight of the sea, I half hoped to find the Greek fleet lying off-shore there, ready to assault Salonika and cut the communications between Constantinople and the bases of the Turkish armies in Macedonia and Epirus. But I was disappointed. For some unknown reason (perhaps because the money for loading the shells had been diverted to more private purposes) the Greek fleet did nothing throughout the war, and did it very badly ; except that one ship actually succeeded in capturing Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, our pro-Turk M.P., together with his son.

From Tempe I climbed to the village of Rapsáni, rich in black wine and silk, where an outpost of *Euzoni* (the pick of the Greek army, dressed in the old national uniform, with short, white, expanding skirts like a ballet girl's) was

stationed to guard the approach from Olympus. And so I made my way along the foot of the mountains, following the course of the Peneus westward to Tyrnavos, from which pretty town I climbed the Melouna Pass, the very road by which the Persians under Xerxes probably came. Within a fortnight it was to give an entrance to another invasion, but at the time Greeks and Turks still stood spying at each other in their neighbouring block-houses, and from the summit I looked north far over the Macedonian plain, in the middle of which lay Ellassóna, surrounded by orderly Turkish camps. George Steevens was then somewhere in that Turkish base, but in those days I had hardly heard his name ; and I went on past Revéni Pass and Zarkos to the largish town of Trikkala, where the Peneus comes down at right angles from the north, and is met by the torrent rushing through the Portais—the gates of the Pindus range, through which I knew at once that I should have to attempt the passage to Arta, declared by all to be impassable.

At Trikkala, among the clattering storks, in hopes of avoiding those terrific Portais, where storms of snow and thunder seemed always to rage, I formed the plan of following up the Peneus to its mountain source, crossing the Turkish frontier to Métsovo, and so making my way through Janina to Arta. It would have been a glorious journey, but the Turkish Consul put every obstacle in my way ; perhaps fortunately, for I should certainly not have come through alive or dead. In hopes of diverting my desire, he even invited me into his house and left me to peruse his library, which consisted of an anthology in twenty volumes, called *Monstres Parisiens*—a choice selection of every possible abomination : at least I can imagine no other. Insufficiently grateful for that privilege, I went up-stream as far as the largish village of Kalabáka, where I heard the *Andarti* were concentrating for a raid over the frontier. The *Andarti* (probably the word by derivation only means Insurrectionists) were the Irregulars, who had gathered like locusts from all

parts of Greece, impelled by patriotism and the hope of plunder. Each had a rifle, a goat's-hair cloak, and a cap, usually marked with the badge of the *Ethnike Etairia*, or National League, under which they were roughly organised into bands. These bands (banditti, as the Turks called them) swirled up and down the country like autumn leaves, advancing when they liked and retiring when they liked, always ready to murder or to run, both at long range. One could not imagine anything more demoralising for a regular army than their presence, except perhaps their rapid disappearance when danger threatened. They assured me that theirs was the Balkan way of fighting, and I have long since discovered they were right. But it does not follow that the Balkan way is the best.

We heard in Kalabáka that three bodies of the *Andarti* had gone forward to the frontier, intent on provoking war. Seeing a gap in the mountains due north, where the frontier would be nearest, I hastily followed up a tributary of the Peneus, which comes down from the west to turn south at Kalabáka, and running most of the way, because anything moves quicker than a Greek horse, I came to a wretched village well named Kakaplevra. There I met wounded Irregulars limping back, dripping blood and howling horribly, as was always the Greek way; for which reason Lyncurgus instituted cruel penalties for the offensive display. A large band had crossed the frontier that afternoon and assaulted two or three Turkish blockhouses, in one of them capturing nine prisoners, who were just being brought in and lodged in the village school. They were afterwards returned with apologies to Constantinople; but that was the beginning of the war (April 9), though the regular declaration was to come nine days later.

It was late, and a kindly peasant (in every land I have found peasants kindly) gave me the hospitality of his one living-room, built above the stable. His charming, but frightful wife, whom he said he had married because he wanted

someone to help with the digging, waddled about like a she-bear, and among the other inhabitants of the room were two boys, a girl of fourteen, a suckling, two cats, a bevy of chickens, and a long-haired pig, which ran in when it desired company or warmth. There was no furniture, and we squatted round the burning logs heaped in the middle of the floor, chewing the sticky paste of half-baked maize, tempered by wine, brought up in my honour from a hole in the floor. The blinding smoke escaped as best it could, partly through two tiny unglazed windows, for glass is unknown in these mountains. Long festoons of soot hung down just to the level of our heads. After supper we all lay down in our clothes without further fuss. The suckling wailed, the chickens clucked, the cats howled, the women snored, the pig grunted, the horse sighed beneath our heads, and we enjoyed a real Chaucerian night together, till at dawn the whole menagerie gathered round to see me wash ; for I had a bit of soap.

Deep snow had fallen in the night, and I plunged through it up the hills till I reached a point on the Turkish frontier and looked down upon the wretched village of Báltino, in the midst of which stood a large white blockhouse, with puffs of smoke issuing from the loop-holed windows. For smokeless powder, though invented, was not in use during this war. About 130 Turks under two officers were besieged in that little fortress, and swarms of Greek *Andarti* were running round it, shouting to each other, firing at the loop-holes whenever they felt inclined, gathering into gesticulating knots for conference, and scattering again without result. A good many were wounded, and six were killed, but they kept up their futile tactics all day, and in the following night the whole of the Turkish garrison escaped in a blinding snowstorm. After midday I hastened back to the telegraph station at Kalabáka, coming under fire on the way from a Turkish blockhouse, because some *Andarti* who were with me insisted upon taking pot shots at an officer

standing there. My telegram to the *Chronicle* was the first news of actual fighting received in London. I think it was my only actual "scoop" in all my experience of wars.

Feeling sure that the next fighting would be just west of Báltino, I resolved to follow the Peneus up towards the difficult pass leading over Pindus to Métsovo and Janina. Far up the pass I came to the last habitable village, high above the defile. It is called Malakási, a Latin name, for the inhabitants of these regions talk among themselves a Latin dialect, relic of the Roman Empire. Above Malakási there are a few hamlets, inhabited only in summer, and there the men and women follow the ancient Spartan custom of living separately, the men in one village and the women in another. Whether, as in Sparta, the men also follow the excellent rule of visiting the women only by stealth, I could not be sure. Probably not, for I noticed the paths between the hamlets were well worn. Nor do the women hold so equal a position as in Sparta. For in the largish house where I was invited to stay at Malakási, the wife, big with child, handed round the customary glasses of jam, water, and "ousa" on a heavy bronze tray, but, by an impolite fiction, she was supposed to be invisible. Girls are never sent to school, because it is not worth while to teach them anything, and a father will tell you he has three sons and two "unregistered," meaning two daughters.

Before dawn I scrambled up a difficult path to the frontier again, and there, in a miserable village called Koutsóufiani, I found a disorganised mob of *Andarti* who had been driven back with some loss from the small Turkish town of Kránia. A good many Italians were mixed up with them, and the old Anarchist Cipriani was lying in the filthy street so sound asleep that I did not care to wake him. I conversed with all manner of men and officers alike, even with Milonas, who was in what might perhaps be called command of the disorderly crowd. But I could get no definite idea of what had happened beyond what my eyes

told me of defeat. Next day I followed the steep pass up to the summit, just below the very top of the Pindus range, here still bearing the name of Mount Lakmon. Thence I looked down the precipitous descent into Epirus, and spread out upon the opposite mountain-side there lay the Turkish town of Métsovo ; grey, with an old walled castle in the midst, and seven big guns in position on a ridge above it. In the far distance the snowy cliffs of Albania, to be well known to me in future years, rose like crests of jagged waves breaking to the north, and near at hand I could trace the thin and precipitous path leading down the valley from Métsovo to Janina and the rustling Dodonean oaks. That was my way to Arta, but the Turks were now firing at everything that moved, and with sorrow I turned back again to Kalabáka, and so down to Trikkala and the entrance to the Portais, through which I had always known I must pass.

And so it came about. For I received a direct telegram from Charlie Williams, the old war correspondent of the *Chronicle*, saying that he was watching the Thessalian frontier, and I was to cross Pindus into Epirus, if I possibly could. I resolved to set out alone on foot with my little knapsack, though everyone told me it was impossible to cross the mountains because of the snow. I had the greatest difficulties ; but on Easter Sunday (April 25) I was able to advance up the mountain road towards Janina, while the Greek soldiers and refugees were killing and cooking Paschal lambs under every green tree. After moving for about ten hours and leaving the beautiful mountain village of Koumzádes, we came to the summit of a pass up which a regiment of *Evzoni* was attempting to recover the ground the Greeks had lost at Pentepegádia. On a neighbouring hill I found Scudamore of the *Daily News*, and E. F. Knight of the *Morning Post*, encamped among all the equipment with which a war correspondent ought to be provided, though I have always feared to hamper myself with such a lot of

stuff—a large green tent, two horses that could move, besides pack-horses, servants and messengers, cases of provisions, cooking utensils, plates and cups and forks, bedding, field-glasses, water-jars, and every other contraption that the heart could desire and the desert lack.

Having thankfully partaken of their lamb, I advanced again further up the pass to a grey little village, hardly distinguishable from the mountain-side, called Karvárasras. It was of course deserted, and I forced my way into a strongly fortified old house, entirely empty, and there I held out alone for four days, my Greek guide going back to Arta for provisions. I had a sort of bread, and most fortunately I had blown off the head of a cock upon the route, and continued to eat the carcase till the maggots became really too animated. It was a happy time—the silence, the view towards Janina and its lake, or towards the wild ranges of Lakka and the heights of Souli, where the women in Byronic times joined hands for their last national dance, and one by one danced over the edge of the precipice rather than submit to the embraces of a Turk. Here too, the scholars tell us, the breed of Sparta first arose. But in spite of all these delights, I must needs go out, first to a battery that was firing from a low hill, and then right up the pass itself to the firing line. On the way I came under serious fire for the first time, and I found at once that the “sub-conscious self” grew outrageous in its protest. As the bullets came humming past me like heavy bumble bees, I tried in vain to overcome that hidden traitor which lurks within us. I remembered that Goethe, when under fire, had “seen brown,” and I was disappointed that I saw neither brown nor red. Mountains, sun, and flowers looked exactly the same as usual ; only I was seized with a peculiar affection for them, as though I could not bear never to see them again.

For the next few days I lived alone in my fortress house, disturbed only by the owner, who ventured back from Arta

and asked to be allowed to sleep in his own kitchen. I did not care where he slept, for he brought the news of the disastrous flight of the Greek Army at Thessaly, and of the occupation of Larissa by the Turks on Good Friday. I knew it was the end; but, refusing to give up hope, I spent many hours on the summit of a high mountain ridge upon our right, helping the *Euzoni* to build a low wall or *sangar* as protection from the Turkish fire. For the Turks were almost continuously assaulting that ridge with guns and rifles, and by peering over the skyline I could watch them advancing from point to point in skirmishing order, the white-capped Albanians being conspicuous.

The firing died away at sunset, for the Turks did not fight by night, but next afternoon (April 29) it was renewed with terrible vigour. The Greeks on the summit hesitated. They looked behind them. In straggling blue lines they came rushing down the mountain-side. Hardly had they gone when the crest swarmed with black figures, shouting, waving red flags, and firing down upon us in the valley. A thin note sounded. "That's the Turkish trumpet!" shrieked a peasant woman at my side. At once all the populace bound their possessions on women's backs, gathered in their children, cows, goats, sheep, chickens, and all they valued, and with incredible rapidity were gone.

The Turks did not pursue, but alarms continually renewed drove the rout onward. It was soon pitch dark, but, fortunately, dry. After leaving the hills, the road passes between steep and rocky heights on one side and, on the other, a deadly marsh over which fire-flies and will-o'-the-wisps were dancing. So through the obscurity we stumbled along the way, lighted only by the malign glare from blazing Philipiádes, until the smell of orange blossom showed me that we were approaching Arta. At about three o'clock in the morning we forced a passage across the steep and narrow bridge, which from end to end was a wriggling mass of soldiers, guns, yelling fugitives, and beasts, many of which

sprang over the parapets into the torrent and were drowned. It was my first experience of panic.

For the next few days the town and its surrounding fields were like a vast and distressful picnic. At last, hearing that all telegrams and letters were stopped for fear of spreading news of disaster, I set off for Patras, on the Gulf of Corinth, to make connection with my paper.

After a few days' lucid interval in Patras and Athens, a subconscious uneasiness drove me back to Arta, and there I found the Greeks making a final effort—a really gallant effort—to retrieve their lost position upon the hills across the river. It lasted for two days, during which the rain fell in torrents. At one point, as I heard afterwards, the Greek attack was very nearly successful, but it was resisted by reinforcements of *Nizam* or regular troops, and by the morning of May 15 all the Greek battalions were dribbling back into the town. Nothing was left but to watch the Turks burning the dead in heaps upon the hills, and to bury the Greek bodies which had been recovered. I estimated the Greek killed at about three hundred, most of them belonging to the 10th Regiment from Corfu and the islands—an impulsive and energetic body of men, whose losses were attributed by their envious friends to breaches of the oath of chastity that all the army took. General Manos spoke a few soldierly, inaudible words over the shallow graves. Others sought the consolation of rhetoric, and I remembered that other funeral oration in which Pericles praised those who showed themselves brave not in words only but in deeds; for I understood now why the old Greeks insisted to satiety upon that classic distinction.

Then came the end of the war. It was Tuesday, May 18. In the late afternoon we heard a trumpet blowing from across the river, and a small party of Turks, preceded by a white flag, approached the bridge. A telegram had come from Constantinople announcing an armistice, and by the intervention of England and other Powers, Greece was saved

from an invasion which would have easily advanced to the Gulf of Corinth on one side, and to Athens on the other. The town gave itself up to joy. Hungry, wet, defeated, miserable, sickened with stench, worn with malaria, dysentery, and typhoid, surrounded by every form of agony and death, none the less, as the cavernous shops took down their shutters and displayed the remnants of their wares, the people went to and fro along the filthy street, cheering and laughing as though the heaven of victory were theirs. So sweet it is to be unexpectedly alive. On a couple of boards, under the orange trees by the river, I gave a peculiar dinner to the Greek officers I knew, and in wine that tasted like the rinsings of medicine bottles we drank "To the Future of Greece !" It was a daring toast.

Early in June a telegram from my editor sent me to Crete ; my orders were to find out, if possible from the Christian insurgents themselves, what they really wanted. Guided by my usual good fortune, I strolled out one Sunday afternoon with my dear interpreter friend, old Sigálas, best of all dragomans, whose only fault was a tendency to call upon the mountains to cover him whenever he saw a Turk ; for he had been present at the Turkish massacre of Christians in Canéa a few months before. Passing through the garden suburb of Halépa, we climbed a rocky edge where, beyond the line of Allied outposts, I happened to detect a Greek flag flying. French sentries ought to have shot us on the way, but we passed unobserved among the rocks, and allayed the passions of the insurgent sentries simply by shouting the Greek words for "*Daily Chronicle*," so powerful among the Greeks was Massingham's influence then. By mere accident I had lit upon the very headquarters of the eastern bands, and they seated me in the place of honour upon a table in a little cottage, while three officers sat upon a bed, and the room was soon crowded up with rifles, revolvers, Cretan

knives, and fine Cretan males, all wearing the black handkerchief round their heads, and trousers like an undivided bag. Having instructed the peasant's wife to milk two goats into a tumbler at intervals for my refreshment, they began the conference. The details are now unimportant, for they demanded, first, the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish troops from an island which, out of 300,000 inhabitants, counted only 75,000 Moslems ; and secondly, they demanded ultimate union with Greece. As is well known, the British Admiral Noel compelled the withdrawal of Turkish troops in the following year because they fired upon British sailors ; and the union has now long been accomplished.

Next day, the Italian Admiral very reluctantly gave me a pass to cross the lines, assuring me the Cretans would shoot me, and the Turks hang me on an olive. Knowing I could not be destined to two deaths at once, I rode out one lovely June morning with Sigálas, who gallantly refused to leave me, and, passing over the conspicuous entrenched hill called Shoubashi, we entered the "neutral zone"—"neutral" meaning that one came under fire from both sides. As we approached the insurgents' outposts, we were received with customary "independent fire," but tying my handkerchief to a stick I rode on, conscious of innocence and of a secret letter stitched into the lining of my waistcoat. After being embraced with fervour, we were escorted to the headquarters at Alikianû, where several hundred insurgents were lounging about, hungry and unhappy, under the orange groves. There we held another conference, with four officers, the men standing round and confirming the statements of their leaders with shouts and brandished rifles, so that the scene was like an early English wapentake. In discussing the union with Greece, I suggested that even the Athenian Government was not an irreproachable model of wisdom and incorruptibility ; but thereupon the rifles began to rage so furiously together that I requested Sigálas to change the subject.

In the evening we rode back to Canéa along the coast, but next day I came out again, accompanied by the Cretan Professor Jannaris, known in those days for his dictionary of modern Greek. I suppose by his influence, I was privileged to sail down the coast in our torpedo gunboat *Dryad* (Captain Pelham), and was put ashore at high-piled Platanéa. The Captain trained a gun to protect our landing, for swarms of insurgents came down to receive us, looking very savage, as usual. But again they embraced us with arms only too open, especially as Professor Jannaris, being a Cretan, was greeted as foster-brother by everyone born in his village, and submitted to being kissed at intervals during the day by scores of bearded and tattered compatriots, whose refinement did not coincide with university ideals. Whenever this happened the Professor turned shyly round to me and explained that he did not comply with the native custom because he liked it. After further conferences at headquarters, I escaped alone into the mountains and ran almost to the foot of the grand central chain called Leukas, or White Mountain, a series of superb gorges, cliffs, and peaks, running up to some 9,000 feet; and there I lay watching for some hours, secretly hoping to get sight of the beautiful wild goat, still not uncommon there, but happily very hard to shoot. At last an insurgent discovered me, and having given me much information about the locality and the political situation, added that the great chief, Hadji Mikhali, had long been awaiting me at supper. As the man had been talking for three-quarters of an hour, I recognised the habit of the "Messenger" in old Greek tragedies, and ran down the mountains in some concern.

A few days later Sigálas and I sailed for Kalamáta on the Messenian coast, and then rode over the mountains, once the haunt of Spartan boys training for endurance, and so down the Langada Pass and through deserted mediæval Mistra to Sparta—to long-desired Sparta at last.

CHAPTER VII

HANGING SWORD ALLEY

SOON AFTER MY RETURN from Greece, being full of malaria, I followed my habitual longing to fly west with the sun for ever, though it was not the United States that I yearned to reach. I was almost content by getting as far as Ireland, which for six years past had seemed to me a fairyland of such incredible beauty that I hardly believed it could exist. In all my journeyings I have never been disappointed, for I have invariably found people more agreeable than I expected, and countries more beautiful. But in Ireland, which is the most beautiful country of the world, I naturally found an excess of beauty that was overwhelming.

At dawn one August day in 1897 I first saw the Irish mountains rising from the sea, like the land of Tirnanog, or like those islands called Hi Brazil which sometimes appear still further west than Ireland, and would remain to be all mankind's spiritual home if only the fishermen who put out in chase of them could fling a brand of fire upon their shore. But this first visit I spent in ranging about the mountains south of Dublin, and joyfully exploring the mere outside of the city itself. For Dublin ought to be the most beautiful of cities, having a mountain river (in those days a drain of filth) in its midst and close at hand wild mountains, "silver strands," cliffs, and the sea itself, besides being mainly built at a period of noble architecture, the finest embodiments of which then stood unconsumed by patriotic fire. I met hardly any of the people who were soon afterwards to become my best friends in the world, but almost every morning I went down to swim from the isolated rocky ledge at the foot of

Dalkey cliffs, where the fever germs slid out of me and were drowned in the tarns beneath Croagh Patrick when the saint told them to begone.

From these rapturous delights I was recalled by the appeal of the artist, John Fulleylove, to write a text for his excellent sketches of Greek architecture and scenery. That I did, and at the same time I set about my book on *The Thirty Days' War*, besides working in odd moments at another essay for my *Plea of Pan*, and composing a lot of verses. But by such charming pursuits no one could maintain a household, or pay for the education of a rapidly growing boy and girl; and when in Greece I had resigned my only steady source of income (the £100 a year as secretary to the London Playing Fields). Then came Massingham's generous invitation to join the staff of the *Daily Chronicle*, which he had made the most conspicuous and most heroic paper in London. It was an offer that almost any writer would have eagerly embraced, and I regarded it with gratitude, but with the deepest apprehension. As usual I was overcome by panic at the idea of writing anything at all. Though I had written a good deal even in those days, it seemed impossible that I could ever put two sentences together, least of all to order. How appalling if I should be found sitting helpless before a blank bit of paper while the printers clamoured for copy! I was aware that my knowledge of most subjects attractive to the readers of newspapers was a vacuum that editors abhorred. Added to this unhappy ignorance was the curse of my wretched shyness and self-distrust, always tempting me to avoid association with others, and making me so sensitive about writing that up to this day I cannot endure to sit in a room while anyone is reading my stuff. But even stronger was the objection that journalism meant the end of imaginative work. Like most people outside the profession, I thought of "mere journalists" with mingled curiosity and contempt. Drawing a sharp line, like most people, between "journalism" and "literature," I was all

on the side of literature. What was worse, like most people, I regarded a journalist as a man without convictions—a conscienceless person who would write equally willingly for any opinion or cause, provided he were paid. Like most people, in my ignorance, I did the great profession insufferable wrong, but my ignorance was profound.

My terror when told that I should have to write a leader one night was ludicrous and painful. I wandered like a distracted dog about the streets around the *Chronicle* office, which then opened on Whitefriars Street. I looked into the dark river, wondering whether it would not be better to end life at once, like Hood's importunate girl, who after all had sold only her body, while I seemed to be selling my soul. For the first time I read the ominous name of the narrow lane which ran behind the office. It was "Hanging Sword Alley"; and I prayed for the sword to fall. Tremulously I climbed the stairs and faced the editor amid the secretaries, writers, and printers buzzing round him. I was told to write three-quarters of a column on the terms slowly being arranged between Greece and Turkey. I felt sure that I could not write a word, but encouraged by Vaughan Nash, who shared my room with one or two other leader-writers, I sat down, started, and finished the thing, well up to time, and without the smallest difficulty.

Not that I was a great leader-writer. For a full-column leader, or a column-and-a-turn, I liked to have two hours' time before me—half an hour to think round the subject or even read what had lately been said about it, and an hour and a half to get the stuff down in, slip after slip as the boy took it away. It is true, I was often driven hard, especially as Massingham in the days of the *Chronicle's* greatness had a way of slithering down the hill of Whitefriars Street in a hansom at 11.30 or even at midnight, though the whole leader page had to be in the printer's hands by one in the morning, and the proofs corrected by half-past two. Going down to the office never later than ten, I would sit and wait,

cursing him as deeply as he, later in the night, loudly cursed the printers and the universe. But somehow or other I always got through, in spite of my tormenting anxiety. I suppose the greatest rush I ever had was when, in later years, the news of Zola's death came suddenly after my usual leader was finished, and I had to write a full column upon Zola straight off. I finished it under the hour, and yet it was intelligible. But I had an exhausted journey home in the old horse tram.

Massingham was beyond comparison the best editor I have ever worked under. Passionate, especially against injustice and cruelty, and abused by the vulgar as "emotional" (which I think means quickly responsive to fine instincts), he was usually guided by an assured and decisive insight that none of the temptations of social position or wordly influence could blind. No one seized the heart of a vital or complicated situation with such unerring rapidity. "There it is," he seemed to say at once, and one felt that to be the end of the question. Violent and outrageously indelicate he might well be, for there was a charming mixture in his nature which once made me describe him as "a delightful combination of St. Francis and Rabelais," each part of the description being heartily applauded by different sections of my audience who knew him well. And, indeed, St. Francis himself could hardly surpass his simple human-kindness, nor Rabelais his primitive language and tolerant acceptance of natural man in every phase.

This remarkable man, of course, dominated the paper, for it was still the day of great and personal editors in Fleet Street. For the five or six years of his office he so inspired the *Chronicle* with his personality that its bitterest enemies had to read it, and those who abused it most loudly regretted its collapse when he was compelled to resign.¹ But besides

¹ Very shortly after I had written this account, that great editor was compelled also to resign his position on the *Nation*, which he himself created early in 1907 and had maintained at a high level of excellence for just over sixteen years.

those distiguished members of the staff with whom I worked—William Clarke, Vaughan Nash, Costelloe, and Henry Norman (assistant editor and literary editor till early in 1899)—the paper was helped along by James Milne, who twice a week, year after year, with Scottish persistence and unvarying manner, contributed a column called "Writers and Readers" upon books soon to be published, and probably had a more intimate knowledge of publishers and the titles of books than any man then living. And hidden away under the roof at the top of the office, a strange and invisible figure, sat Pattison, own brother of Mark Pattison, the model scholar and Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, and of the famous Sister Dora of Walsall. How that shy and gentle creature lived no one ever knew. I believe that once or twice a year he wrote a special article upon the Board of Trade Returns, but he never wrote anything else, and yet sat always hidden in his unvisited lair.

Very different was Charlie Williams, "the Old War Horse," as we used to call him. A son of Antrim, he was heavy, deeply scarred, the hero of fourteen or fifteen campaigns, uncertain in temper, violent in action (there was a myth that in earlier days he kicked an editor downstairs and took over the command by the right of the strongest), hard drinking but never drunk, rivalling the editor himself in flowing language of universal condemnation, and loving to sit in a punt all day far up the Thames, no matter how hard it rained, fishing with rigorous persistence and never catching anything. Experience had taught him a good deal about war as it was then understood, and still more about field-days—so much that I once heard Evelyn Wood say, "When I see old Charlie shut up his telescope, I know it is all over." I sometimes went out to field-days with him, and he could introduce me to Evelyn Wood (his hero), Wolseley (whom he claimed in part to have "made"), Buller, the Duke of Connaught, Haig and others; for he was well thought of in the army, and he had a private notion

that even Kitchener would not have hanged him, though he was a war correspondent.

Early in 1899 I succeeded Henry Norman as literary editor of the *Chronicle*, and in those fortunate days for literature it was a rather important position. Three whole columns of the paper were nearly always given to reviews or other literary subjects every day, and hundreds of thousands of people took the *Chronicle* for those columns and nothing else, to such a pitch of excellence had the page been raised by Massingham, its first editor, and by Norman in succession. Unfortunately for me, the editor had (and on the *Nation* continued to have) a habit of cramming in all the most interesting reviews first—a journalistic device excellent for readers but embarrassing for the literary editor. The consequence was that, when I took up the task I found eighty columns of "over-matter" already set and stowed away in my drawers. Eighty columns of reviews and those the dullest that could be selected! A few were so appalling in dreariness that I had to scrap them and pay the writers off. The rest I worked through by a series of literary supplements, still possible in those days—each supplement giving me about eleven columns. But, of course, I had to dilute the ditch-water with better stuff to make it endurable, and the beginning of my business was hard. However, I inherited a good staff of reviewers, and before I resigned the position at the end of 1903 I had worked that staff up to about the finest set of literary critics then to be imagined, and it was an age of literary criticism. Before the change of editors during the South African War, while I was shut up in Ladysmith, I could rely in the first place upon Bernard Shaw, whose genius was then known to a fairly wide circle. His assistance, it is true, could be called in only occasionally, and once when I had sent him four or five books on Wagner and other musical subjects for a joint review of a column and a half, he wrote violently refusing to do the work except on special terms, and threatening the paper with all the terrors of the

Authors' Society, in spite of his admiration for our editor.
To which I replied :

“ DEAR SIR,—I am directed by the editor to inform you that he will see you damned before he gives you more than five pounds for the article in question—Yours, etc.”

Shaw's answer ran :

“ DEAR SIR,—Please inform the editor that I will see him and you and the whole of the *Chronicle* staff boiled in Hell before I will do it for that money.—Yours, etc.”

Whereupon I asked that the books should be returned so that I might send them to someone of less pecuniary weight ; and he wrote the article with his accustomed generosity, as I had always expected he would.

Then I had Lionel Johnson, exquisite critic and writer, English by birth and life, but gifted with strong Irish and Catholic inclinations. He lived in a hotel in Fleet Street, and it was believed he could never write until he was well drunk. No doubt he drank a good deal—had done since his Winchester and Oxford days ; but his copy (when at last it came, after I had forced it out of him) was written in a steady and legible hand, almost without correction, and I never thought of even reading it before sending it up to the printers, so excellent it invariably was. But one night (September 29, 1902) when I was working late in the office, a message came that a man had been found apparently dying in Fleet Street and the only clue to identity was a letter in his pocket addressed to me, but not signed. I went to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and was there shown Lionel Johnson lying on a bed, breathing heavily, but quite unconscious, the skull being fractured. It appeared that while bringing me his “ copy ” he had fallen down at the corner of Whitefriars Street and knocked his head against the curb. The

doctors told me his skull was as thin as paper. He never recovered consciousness, and soon afterwards we buried that true poet in an ordinary grave at Kensal Green.

Almost the only other critic whose work I could send up without reading was William Archer, always so safe, so sound, writing with such knowledge, and every now and then displaying a wealth of satire and imaginative power little suspected even by his intimate friends. For artistic books I had the Pennells, Joseph and Elizabeth, both so clever, so capable of writing, and he so apt to raise the vicious controversy that enlivens artistic circles. For novels there was Hubert Bland, the Fabian, who always grumbled if I could not give him two or three columns a week, and whose acute and energetic brain must, I think, have become sodden and blunted with the vast number of novels he clamoured for and, at least partially, must have absorbed. Edward Clodd, whom I once truly described as "the friend of genius and the genius of friendship," and who gradually became the dear friend of myself as well, could be trusted to write an article on folklore and primitive beliefs that surpassed in learning any book he was reviewing. Alfred Haddon, the "Head Hunter" of New Guinea, was equally good on everything connected with anthropology, primitive ritual, and cats' cradles. William Morrison, the famous prison chaplain, could write of criminals and prisons with something more than knowledge. For essays, dramas, and graceful books, I and my successor always had L. F. Austin, till his too early death in 1905. He was the highest type of the "urbane" man ; courteous, graceful in mind and body, recognised in all intellectual society as well as in the theatres, himself an essayist of charming individuality, the very best of after-dinner speakers, and at home within a mile or so of Pall Mall, but nowhere else in all the world ; and yet entirely modest, amiable as a pleasant child, and except in appearance giving himself none of the airs appropriate to the man-about-town.

For poetry and fine literature I had Arthur Waugh, himself a poet and one of the surest critics, endowed also with unusual knowledge and an excellent style. For the occult and semi-mysterious side of psychology I had Frank Podmore, the entirely sceptical but prominent member of the Psychical Research Society; and for Scottish folklore and Celtic literature there was Eleanor Podmore, possessing a singularly delicate gift of words. For Irish history and literature, as well as for Shakespearean times, there was Mrs. N. F. Dryhurst, always bringing with her the wit of Ireland, the kindling inspiration, the flaming wrath, and a sarcasm like the lick of a lioness's tongue. Sometimes, too, Henry Norman would write, chiefly on the mechanical inventions that always attracted him; and sometimes the editor himself would give me a column of his alert and eager criticism, especially on politics or the drama.

After the change of editors I enlisted Clarence Rook, who joined the regular staff as editor of the *Office Window* while I was in South Africa, and was always one of the most "useful" and delightful writers on almost any part of the paper. It was he who introduced me to the large but carefully selected Meynell circle, so gracious in their free refinement, and to Evelyn Sharp, fresh from the staff of the *Yellow Book*, most unmistakable of writers, always equally ready with her penetrating simplicity, her sympathetic wit, and indignant pathos. Florence Farr must have begun to write for me about the same time. She was best known, I suppose, for her exquisite voice—a speaking voice of a beauty hardly ever surpassed—and for her recitation in a kind of modulated chant to the zither or lyre, under the direction of William Yeats.

One evening, after my first return from the Boer War, a person of unknown name was announced, as many such there were, and, cursing aloud or silently, I awaited his entrance. Can a man stride with a proud and melancholy shyness? If so, he strode in that manner. He was tall,

absurdly thin, and a face of attractive distinction and ultra-refinement was sicklied over with nervous melancholy and the ill condition of bad food or hunger. Almost too shy to speak, he sat down proudly and asked if I could give him work. I enquired what work he could do, and he said, "None." At once recognising my former self in him, I asked whether he would like some reviewing on any subject, and on what. He replied that he knew nothing of any subject, and was quite sure he could not write, but certainly he did want work of some sort. I asked if he would not care to try a short review of a scholarly book that I was just throwing away ; for if he could not do it, that would make little difference to me or to anyone else. I urged him repeatedly, and at last, with extreme reluctance, he consented, and nervously took his leave, just mentioning that his name was Edward Thomas, lately from Lincoln College, Oxford, and now living in Lavender Hill, Nightingale Lane, Rosemary Cottage, or some such address (for I used afterwards to tell him he chose his wandering homes simply for their pretty names). Of course, at once he became one of my very best reviewers, and soon one of my closest friends. Shy and reserved of feeling he always remained ; too self-distrustful till nearly the end. Once after visiting him in his home near Petersfield, I told him I was sure he could and did write admirable verse. He answered that he never had and never would. But yet, what verse he has written ! When last I saw him, only for a moment, during the war, he was in uniform, and had gained incredibly in health and stature and confidence.

In these memories I must have left out a good many contributors, some of whom, I admit, were thrust upon me and were often so bad that it was less trouble to re-write the whole of their reviews than to correct them as one corrects a child's mistakes. But I should mention J. H. Morgan, afterwards a barrister distinguished for courage in defence of my friend Roger Casement at the State Trial. He was a

Balliol Scholar in history, had a wide knowledge of his subject, and was a good writer too when one could get him to start writing. But for that we had to lock him in a solitary room and starve him out. I used to write a terrible lot of the reviews myself also, and though I devoted a great deal of zeal to "the Page," I was leader-writer too. I kept up the drill of my company beside Shadwell Basin till the South African War came, and I was repeatedly sent away upon some mission or another ; as once to Maidstone to investigate an outbreak of typhoid among the hoppers and townspeople. There I met a Dr. Wright (I believe the famous Sir Almroth of later years), who had come specially to save the inhabitants by his Anti-Typhoid Inoculation, but found them anxious indeed to live, but not to be saved. For hardly one would submit to a treatment that in a year or two was to preserve many lives in South Africa, as the inoculators claimed.

Two or three far more important tasks were allotted me in those two happy years while the *Chronicle* was still a paper of light, and we were all serving its editor with the enthusiasm that raises journalism to the level of a Church or Sacred Order. Early in 1898 the misgovernment of Cuba and other Spanish possessions, especially under Governor Weyler, "the Tiger," was arousing in the United States an indignation, which may have been mixed with other motives, but was certainly in part genuine. The sinking of the *Maine*, either by secret attack or internal combustion as she lay in Havana Harbour made war certain, and I began preparations for America. But here, as in the case of the Soudan later in the same year, I was frustrated. Maurice Low was then the *Chronicle* correspondent in the States, and because he was on the spot and intimate with the American nature, he was appointed for the war. When I came to know him personally at the Washington Conference of 1921, I understood that the appointment was excellent, but at the time it seemed bitter, for I was to be sent only to Spain, where

action was very unlikely. I do not regret it now, for I have been given only one other opportunity of learning something about Spain (during the insurrection at Barcelona and the Morocco campaign of 1909). And in Spain there always lurks a melancholy but persuasive fascination.

Some weeks later I was recalled, and had an easy journey, for Drummond Wolff, then our Ambassador in Madrid, asked me to carry his despatches because the post was so unsafe that he usually had to send them by courier to Gibraltar to meet a ship homeward bound. The question of exchanging Gibraltar for Ceuta has never been settled, chiefly, I suppose, because it would cost a lot to convert Ceuta into a fortress fit to command the Straits ; or because we have spent so much on Gibraltar that we imagine it must necessarily be of some use ; or, finally, because the Rock looks so romantic, so imposing, and we always hope that Spain will remain neutral or allied. Since those distant days I have thought of Spain with a peculiar affection—a sense of gaiety, satire, and pathos mingled. It so happened that the supreme violinist, Sarasate, occupied the next room to mine at the Hotel Roma in Madrid. In grief at the succession of disasters in the war, he refused to appear at any public concert, but sometimes late at night I would hear him playing quietly to himself, and the music seemed to overflow with sorrow. Perhaps, however, that idea was only an example of the “pathetic fallacy.”

In the following spring (1899) I was in Ireland for the second time, and I have visited that holy and unquiet land so often since that it is hard to avoid confusion of impression, if not of events. The editor sent me to discover, if possible, the truth about a rather serious riot in which Michael Davitt had been stoned at Charleville on the border of Counties Limerick and Cork. Since his release from long imprisonment in Portland I had heard Davitt speak twice in London, and he had won from me, as from others, an admiration that only increased as I came to know him in

later years. It was on this journey that I first became acquainted with the group of varied and lovable people, partly literary, partly political, who have given a grace and poignant interest to Dublin life such as I have found in no other city. This incalculable advantage is partly due to the measurable size of Dublin, allowing a close and frequent intercourse between friends, and a rapid estimation of enemies. But chiefly it is due to the common purpose that unites all hearts and minds in spite of violent and often bloodthirsty divergence of opinion—so violent that I have heard one true patriot describe another true patriot as a barbaric and irredeemable scoundrel because he refused to agree upon some minor clause in a Land Act.

Through C. H. Oldham, whose Home Rule principles had cost him an important position in Trinity College, I was introduced to the Contemporary Club, which then met every week in his rooms opposite Trinity College for a free discussion of politics and literature. There I became acquainted with Dr. George Sigerson, scholar, historian, collector of the arts, doctor of the poor, and father of a woman poet. He sat usually silent, his mind working slowly, as it seemed through old age, though he could not then have been old. And I met John Taylor, cleverest of all, though never successful. Bitter of tongue he was, a master of sarcasm, passionately eloquent, I was told, when deeply stirred by another's wrong ; formidable in his silence and in his rare but keen remarks that cut through comfortable theorising as a thin string cuts through cheese. And there was Oldham himself, exuberant, dogmatic, learned, a trustworthy source of knowledge and rather inclined to moderation, boasting himself English, and talking with a brogue thick as a turf bog ; endlessly hospitable and kindly, while with loud denunciations he allayed personal strife. I suppose it must have been a year or two later that I met Sheehy Skeffington, fearless, true-hearted, going alone like the cat, his hand against every man, sharply contradictory, champion

of women, a violent pacifist, unpopular and universally beloved. If I met him then, as I met him so often and always with such delight afterwards, he had still seventeen years of life to run before a British officer murdered him in a frenzy of religious or homicidal madness. It must have been later, too, that I met Tom Kettle at the Contemporary—Skeffington's brother by marriage, but of a very different nature, so genial, pliable (only too pliable, too genial, it was said), a born orator, and perhaps with cleverer brain even than John Taylor's, being constructive as well as fervid. I think the last time I heard him at the Club was just after Winston Churchill's speech at the Celtic Football Ground in Belfast (February 1912). I remember he discussed the possibility of avoiding partition and of ensuring peace in years to come ; of which years he was to see but a few before death found him fighting in France "for the rights of small nationalities"—as the deceptive phrase coined by our political coiners then ran.

There were two figures in those early days at the Contemporary which held my attention most closely. One was that John O'Leary, whom I had known in exile twenty-two years before in Paris. Now I found him little changed in appearance, though wasted almost to extremity. His mind was alert (when I met him in later years it had become confused and clouded), but he was inclined to prose and meander on himself. He still believed in nothing but force, though by force he meant little more than making things as unpleasant as possible for the British Government. Though respected for his past, he was evidently regarded in the Club as rather a bore, and there was a sense of relief when he withdrew early.

Yeats was not living in Ireland in those days, but I had met him for the first time a few weeks before at the Podmores' house. I did not fully appreciate the genius or the charming nature of that exquisite poet until a later time, when, partly as relief from my position under a hostile

editor, to whom I was opposed upon every subject, I used to attend his evening discussions on poetic and other arts in his attic room near St. Pancras Church ; and I should have continued to attend them with great pleasure and advantage but for the persistent presence of the most inflexible bore that ever oppressed the Atlantic in his passage.

With Yeats one naturally associated the name of Maud Gonne in those days, for in the previous year they had made a progress through Ireland together, holding meetings to commemorate the Rebellion of 'Ninety-eight. She, too, came to the Contemporary ; and I, like everyone else but John Taylor, was overwhelmed by her beauty. It was indeed amazing. At the first sight of her I held my breath in adoration. Tall she was, and exquisitely formed ; the loveliest hair and face that ever the sun shone on. Exquisitely dressed besides—too exquisitely dressed John Taylor kept snarling to me when we were alone, for he was a stern and rigid man. In my first note of her I say “ not overwhelmingly clever, not at all ‘ smart,’ ” and that description remains true, nor does anyone regret the absence of cleverness and smartness in that indignant and passionately sympathetic heart. One thing further I noticed : at the Club she sat long silent, perhaps bored by the political conversation, perhaps thinking of Paris from which she had just arrived. But when the others began asking me questions about the Greek War and fighting, at once she roused herself and became eager, listening and asking question with the rest. Then I saw the meaning of that strong and beautiful chin. I knew that her longing was for action in place of all the theorising and talk, so general in Dublin ; and then, as though by some prophetic insight, I foresaw the kind of marriage she would certainly make. “ The first man of action ”—I said to myself—“ the first man of resolute action whom she meets will have her at his mercy.”

I do not clearly remember the details of the Charleville riot which I was to investigate, connected, no doubt, with

the United Irish League, founded by William O'Brien in the previous year. But after visiting Charleville and scouring around to collect what evidence I could, I went on to Limerick, where I found the children preparing bonfires for April 1, so as to "burn away the fairies, who else would turn you into a small little man or a small little woman." I went to Killaloe and walked up the beautiful shore of Lough Derg almost to Scariff in drenching rain, against which the keeper of a small general store lent me his fine blue coat, remarking, "Now you look like a real gentleman for once !"

Limerick, Killaloe, Scariff—how different to me are their associations now ! Limerick, where the Lord Mayor O'Callaghan, whom I knew, was murdered over the shoulder of his beautiful and intellectual wife ; Killaloe, where the night before I arrived (November 18, 1920), four youths had been murdered by the British while crossing the bridge as prisoners ; Scariff, where I saw their bodies laid out in the chapel ; and Raheen, close by, where I said good-bye to Edward Lysaght as he started one morning in his motor for Dublin, having at his side the scholar and assistant in his farm, young Clune, to be murdered three days later in Dublin Castle. But those associations belong to the winter of the Black-and-Tan Terror, and my memories of 1899 are very different. In Limerick they call up chiefly the figure of John Daly, inevitably elected Mayor because he had lately emerged from an imprisonment of thirteen and a half years in Portland for treason-felony, and was a remarkable man besides. Tall and thin he was, his skin withered, the yellow of imprisonment still evident upon it ; nearly bald and his black beard silvered, but the eyes still bright blue ; the face refined but sane ; his natural sweetness still preserved ; his temper not irritable nor soured at all.

Proceeding to Castlebar to learn something of a congested District and the "striping" of the land, I was welcomed at the station by an excited crowd of patriots, who all insisted

on shaking hands with me. I could not imagine why. One of them shouted in my ear, "I have long heard of your eloquence!" and as I disliked eloquence, never having possessed the smallest touch of it, I perceived there must be some mistake. So there was. They were expecting a Member of Parliament named Condon, and as I was a stranger they naturally supposed me to be their Member. However, a local man of affairs, James Daly, received me with almost equal enthusiasm, showed me the congested District and "striped" land, showed me where the French cavalry a century before had chased the British to Athlone in the "Castlebar Races," and, above all in interest to myself, showed me Mount Nephin or Nevin, scene of a beautiful old Irish ballad, and, as I vainly imagine, of my own birth many centuries ago. Next day being Sunday, there arrived Mr. Condon, M.P., with Haviland Burke, whom I had met in Athens after his return from Actium, where he had composedly watched the Preveza guns firing throughout the war. And in the afternoon they held a meeting in an open street near a bridge, upon which a body of police stood in close formation with rifles and batons ready. Haviland Burke opened the proceedings by shouting that if there was murder that day it would be the fault of the police. This statement appeared to irritate rather than conciliate that body. For the next moment they drew their batons and charged straight down the road, cracking almost every head within reach. But by standing perfectly still in the middle of the road, I escaped without a single blow, and ✓ since that time I have adopted those tactics usually with complete success in every "discrepancy with the police" (as our Londoners call it). When the police had returned, panting and excited, the meeting proceeded without further interruption except eggs and stones.

CHAPTER VIII

LADYSMITH

WHEN I had been in Paris hardly over a week, watching the Dreyfus case, I was suddenly recalled by an issue of far graver consequences for England. Ever since the criminal error of the Jameson Raid and the subsequent collapse of the "No-Enquiry" Commission, which thickened with natural suspicions the noisome air of corruption and greed surrounding the gold speculation in South Africa, the British relations with the Transvaal had become more and more strained. Hope of peace revived when Milner was sent out as High Commissioner to the Cape early in 1897, for his personal honour was above suspicion, and in South Africa that was an almost incredible attribute.

Throughout 1899, negotiations, conferences, offers of terms and withdrawals of terms, proposals for Uitlander franchise, and discussions as to the meaning or fact of British "suzerainty," with increasing enmity and suspicion on both sides, had precariously continued. All except those statesmen who peevishly complained that they could not see through boards and piano-cases, knew that Kruger was secretly arming, as well he might after the treacherous onslaught of the Raid. Those of us who contemplated the immense fortunes accumulated by the gold-mine owners, and appreciated their eagerness to clear out of Africa so soon as the accumulation was vast enough to dominate Park Lane, smiled when Milner described such enviable persons as "Helots."

Under these conditions of exaggerated grievances on the one side, purposely emphasised by the insatiable greed of

the mine-owners, and on the other a natural suspicion and apprehension, combined with an insecure reliance upon foreign intervention, all the complicated negotiations were futile. The Bloemfontein conference broke down in June. Dr. Leyds, acting as emissary for the Transvaal in Europe, appears then to have telegraphed that one or other of the European Powers was bound to interfere ; and indeed there was ground for the expectation, not only owing to the Kaiser's telegram of congratulation to Kruger after the defeat of the Raid—a telegram easily justified, though intensely irritating to British pride—but because the British course of action was detested in Germany and Holland, while France had been violently alienated from us by the Fashoda incident of the previous year. We now know, in fact, that it was only the Kaiser's personal influence which prevented a German, and perhaps a general European movement in defence of the Republics. Under such conditions, the hope of peace gradually dwindled week by week, and while I was in Paris, Joseph Chamberlain delivered at Birmingham (August 26) what even E. T. Cook describes as “an in-judicious speech.”

That speech was made on a Saturday, and on the Monday I was recalled from the siege of “Fort Chabrol” for events leading up to a far more terrible siege. Charles Williams introduced me to Evelyn Wood, who advised waiting a few days, but on September 8 the Cabinet decided to send out a brigade—a brigade !—and next day I sailed from Southampton, Massingham and Charles Williams seeing me off at Waterloo.

When we were still about four days off the Cape, we saw far off the homeward-bound mail approaching. In those days, before “wireless,” all depended on her news, and gentlemanly Pearse (War Correspondent to the *Daily News*) went round urging us not to cheer if war had been declared, because the cheering would hurt the feelings of the Boers on board. Up she came through a drift of wind

and rain, and as she passed us she ran up flags signifying, "War thought certain." So the signal also stood as we steamed into port beneath the shadow of the Table Mountain, and entered the dusty, scrubby streets of a town redeemed from the common Colonial hideousness only by the Mountain and the relics of early Dutch settlement.

Having resolved to reach Bloemfontein and Pretoria, if possible, before the actual fighting began, I stole away from the ship early next morning, and travelled for the first time over the Karroo, and across the Orange River, seeing many strange growths, birds and wild animals on the road, and arriving in Bloemfontein late at night the following day.

In that quiet town—a rather beautiful town as South African towns go, and at that time the capital of one among the best-governed States in the world—I had a long conference with Chief Justice De Villiers, rather a man of culture than a politician, who proudly showed me his excellent library, his garden, and his Greek coins; with Fischer, like De Villiers, an advocate of peace; and with President Steyn, in whose character I was singularly mistaken. For I thought to myself, "Here is another of those middle-aged gentlemen who, willingly or unwillingly, muddle and mess their peoples into war, like Chamberlain and the rest of them; and then watch the killing and dying from a safe and comfortable distance." And yet, from the beginning to the end of the war, there was no one—not even De Wet and Botha themselves—who faced all the personal miseries and dangers of war with more persistent gallantry than that elderly lawyer.

Going on to Pretoria, I called upon Kruger in his little house, guarded by two marble lions—the gift of Cecil Rhodes—but was told he was engaged in prayer. My visits to State-Secretary Reitz and Attorney-General Smuts in their pleasant villas out at Sunnyside were more opportune. Reitz, though anxious to help me personally, was nervous,

excitable, and deeply perturbed. Jan Christian Smuts, then fresh from triumphant Law examinations in Cambridge, and in later years to become the admired idol of the British public, was sorrowful but calm.

All but military trains had ceased running, but Reitz generously allowed me to go towards the Natal frontier in one of the four trains that were taking down the 800 Middleburg farmers with their horses; we crawled on through night and day until we came to a full halt at Standerton, where I requested to see the General, and was ushered into the presence of Joubert—"slim Piet," as his friends and enemies called him—the hero of the Boer victory at Majuba, and now in command of the Boer Army. He was surrounded by young men and boys in ordinary dress, forming his Staff. He himself wore the usual brown slouch hat with a crape band, and a blue frock-coat, not luxuriously new. His beard was white, but his long straight hair rather black than grey. His brown or sallow face was deeply scored and wrinkled, but the dark brown eyes still bright, looking out on the world with a simplicity mingled with shrewdness, or some subtler quality. Speaking English with a piquant lack of grammar and misuse of words, he kindly told me that if I would stop there for the night, he would take me up to the frontier with him next morning.

At Zandspruit the Boers had mustered something under 10,000 men in a fairly organised camp, and the men rushed up to greet their Commander-in-Chief, shaking him by the hand and patting him affectionately on the back. For the Boer Army was, I suppose, the most democratic that ever existed, the Greek being almost servile in comparison. I went over the camp, and compared it in my mind with the sort of thing the Cimbri and Teutons used as moving base when they attacked the Roman Province, although at that time the Boers had but few women with them. The kitchens were poor, bread taking three days to make, and many of the detachments eating their meat raw—really raw, not

sun-dried as biltong. But the sights that attracted me most, though I only glanced sideways, were two great guns laid on their trucks upon the rails and swaddled up in sacking. They were two of those Creusot 6-in. guns which came to be so familiar to us as "Long Toms," throwing 96 lb. shell—nothing very tremendous, the veterans of the Great War may think, but sufficient in effect if they collided with house or man or horse. By Joubert's courtesy I secured a coal truck and partly pushing it, partly helped on the ascent by a little engine, we made our way past Volksrust, having fatal Majuba Hill on our right, over the frontier to Charlestown, the first British village of Natal.

So, on October 5, at last I came to Ladysmith, then as unknown to history as to me, and there I was doomed to remain, with brief intervals, till May 6, in which time I came to know almost every stock and stone of the little place; and history came to know it too. For myself, there was a good deal of variety (unpleasant variety), especially at first, in finding stabling and "forage" for my three horses, and food and shelter for my elderly Cape boy and a young Zulu, to say nothing of myself. In those days, though a censorship was just established, a correspondent with the British Army had to look after his own supplies and transport, and the task as a rule occupied about half his working time.

In the midst of various tribulations and the general chaos of a base into which regiments from India and detachments of Colonial troops were pouring, apparently at random, I rushed up to Harrismith over Van Reenen's Pass, in hope of seeing what the Free State was doing. And I found the Free State dragging guns along with ox-waggons, while the Scots, who had dominated that little, bare, but sunny town on the Plaatberg, were stealing away across the Natal frontier, usually hidden among sacks and other baggage, which the railway officials carefully avoided investigating ;

for were they not Scots themselves? I, too, contrived to get down in similar fashion, though without claim to Scottish support. And it was fortunate that I did. For that was on October 8, and the war openly began on the 11th. On the 13th Sir George White arrived to take command. On the 14th I made another rush—up to Dundee, where Penn-Symons held a brigade thrown forward in a helpless position. While he was talking to me in his tent (I had been introduced by young Hanna of the Leicesters, with whom I was putting up, as he had put up in my room in Ladysmith) a shell plumped close by us, and Penn-Symons rushed out crying, “Damned impudence, they’re shelling us!” Yes, from a hill commanding his whole camp, the impudent Boers were shelling his little force. Within a few days they were to kill Penn-Symons himself as he galloped about the plain with an orderly carrying a red pennon in front of him.

It was mainly political reasons also that kept our larger force in Ladysmith itself—political reasons and the objections to sacrificing the £2,000,000 worth of military stores collected there; for in those days £2,000,000 seemed a large sum. But for political reasons, Sir George White would never have remained in so indefensible a position. The politicians feared the effect of a general retreat upon the dubious populations of Natal and the Cape, but it was soon evident that our position gave the Boers the initiative in strategy. Three or four times we defeated them in small engagements, as at Elandslaagte, but the defeats made no difference to the slow but hardly interrupted movements by which we could feel them gradually hemming us in. From the small hills close around Ladysmith we could watch them on all sides calmly trekking along with their ox-waggons and commandos of mounted men, and day by day the radius of my rides outside the town became shorter. Then came the appalling event of “Black Monday” (October 30). Some four miles

away to the north of the town, in difficult country called Nicholson's Nek, well known to me because I had ridden out there with Major Altham, the Gloucesters, just arrived from India, and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, attempting a surprise themselves, were surprised in the darkness by a large Boer force under de Wet. Stampeded mules carried havoc and lost the mountain guns. The enemy, hidden among rocks, poured a terrible fire upon our men, who were as usual only too visible. Many were killed, many wounded, 1,100 were taken as prisoners to Pretoria.

Three days later (November 2) the regular siege began, the railway and telegraph wires being cut, and the town exposed to guns from all four points of the compass. Happily, Sir John French had slipped out under heavy rifle fire by the last train, to conduct his remarkable campaign of bluff upon the Colesberg lines in the north of Cape Colony, and further to win renown in the relief of Kimberley and the defeat of Cronje at Paardeberg. I suppose I ought to have gone, and for about an hour I did debate the point with myself, but it seemed to me impossible to leave the position. To stay was not a case of courage, but simply of common behaviour. We could not tell how long the siege might last, but there we were in the very front line, and for a war correspondent that is the choice of all positions in the world. How could we abandon it? Or how could we even think of quitting those famous British and Irish regiments gathered there at the centre of peril? It appeared to me unimaginable, and evidently others of my colleagues thought so too, for only one of them attempted to go.

And those others were very remarkable men. Ranking high above all, in my esteem, were my two friends, George Steevens and Willie Maud. Maud I had met in Greece, and wherever one met him, he was always the same true-hearted, sunny-tempered, absolutely honourable man. He was for the *Graphic*, and was by far the best artist correspondent I have known, as well as being a good writer, and

entirely fearless, as his clear, china-blue eyes seemed to show. With him came George Steevens, famous already as war correspondent to the *Daily Mail*. He had published a collection of "Monologues of the Dead," in the manner of Lucian, and had written some remarkable letters from India. But his great success had been his account of the Egyptian campaign, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, a book of enormous sale. In appearance he was rather small, brown-eyed, white-faced, not very noticeable at first sight. Maud said he had a look of Keats ; I did not recognise that, but he looked what he was—a refined and thoughtful scholar; yet very active and quite confident of himself. He was to see no other campaign. Maud was to die in the next from the effects of this. And I, who was older than either, was to go out to succeeding wars alone.

I have told the story of the siege in detail in my book, *Ladysmith*. I had hoped to live each day of it, not "as 'twere my last," as Bunyan advised, but with full vitality, interrupted only by my usual bouts of fever and rheumatism. But on February 9 the Hindus carried me away in a dhoolie to hospital in a Congregational chapel, and there I lay for a fortnight in high fever, suffering an extremity of pain, only relieved by boiling my head in hot water, and by occasional blessings of morphia, such as we and the Germans bestowed upon our men in the Great War, and as the authorities appear to allow to a woman about to be killed by the State butcher. Frank Rhodes, Captain Lambton, and many other officers, men, clerks, and civilians visited me every day, bringing the little news there was to bring. While I lay among the sick and dying, nothing of importance occurred in the besieged position, except that the Staff watched with interest and alarm a host of Kaffirs working upon the Klipp River below the Intombi Camp, trying to dam up the stream and flood the town.

Happily for us, their labours were cut short by the heavy fighting through the pass from the Tugela by Pieter's Hill,

where day after day Buller was making his final effort at relief. Even up to February 27 all seemed so uncertain that rations were again cut down after a brief increase. But next day, from every point of observation, one could see the Boer waggons trekking away, the laagers breaking up, and, what was still better, the "Long Toms" being removed, under heavy fire of our Naval battery. And as I returned from King's Post into the central street of the town, I saw—God's mercy ! what were these strange figures riding on fat, shiny, luscious horses ? They were Lord Dundonald and his small party of mixed Irregulars—Imperial Light Horse and Natal Volunteers—who had galloped forward in front of Buller's advance. Cheer ? Of course we cheered. But it was a thin and wavering cheer, such as the ghosts in Hades raised when they saw the solid and material form of Ulysses or Æneas enter their shadowy home.

The siege had lasted one hundred and eighteen days, and now it was over. In various antiquated inns and lodging-houses one still may admire a picture representing Buller and White meeting with enthusiastic grip of hands, while lusty crowds applaud the patriotic triumph. Nothing of the kind happened. On March 1, Buller came secretly into the camp, and departed unrecognised. I suppose it was then that, when urged to pursue the fleeting Boers, he replied, "Damn pursuit." In condemnation of that neglect, one of his Staff officers afterwards silently pointed out to me the Red Book sentence : "The General who refuses to pursue a beaten enemy on the plea that his troops are tired should be at once relieved of his command." Sir George White was of different stuff. Mustering every man and horse that could crawl, he marched us out in column along the Newcastle road, in the hope of cutting off the Boers' retreat at their railhead by Modder Spruit. I have seen many miserable and pathetic marches, but none so heartrending as that. The men looked like parodies of death. They were so weak they could not straighten their knees, but crept with legs doubled

under them. Along the whole route one saw them falling out and falling down by the roadside. Even the gunner horses were so thin they could hardly stir the guns. Their riders were so thin they could hardly sit the horses for pain. Yet, like a line of resurrected skeletons, the column crawled and stumbled on. When the enemy runs, the General's first and only duty is to pursue, and for three, almost for four, miles, we pursued. We reached Limit Hill, with its fatal memories of Black Monday. And as we reached it, we saw the last Boer train steam unmolested away towards the Transvaal frontier. Buller, with his fresh cavalry and his guns drawn by those luscious horses—what might not he have accomplished? I still believe that, with one day's energetic pursuit, he could have brought the end of the war within sight. But "Damn pursuit," said Buller.

Two days later, with all the pomp of his active, healthy, and victorious army, he celebrated a triumphant entry into the suffering town. Sir George White's garrison lined the route in his honour. Unable to stand, they sat down upon the edges of the road. On the steps of the battered town hall, Sir George was waiting, surrounded by his Staff. I happened to be sitting on the kerb exactly opposite. As Buller passed, Sir George and all the Staff saluted. But Buller turned his head away and made no response. For all that appeared he might have been taking more interest in myself! The siege was indeed over. White and his Staff departed; Buller and his Staff reigned in their stead. And oh, the difference!

CHAPTER IX

PRETORIA

As soon as I gathered strength enough to stand with security, I drove my little cart down to Colenso, and there with Frank Rhodes went over the fatal scene of December 15, tracing the course of the battle by the skeletons of the horses still lying where they fell beside the guns. A train took me on to Durban, where all the other correspondents of the siege were gathered, under orders to join Lord Roberts in Bloemfontein—all except Willie Maud, who had developed enteric and was lying deadly ill up at the sand-ridge called Berea.

I naturally expected to be ordered round with the rest to join the advance upon Pretoria, but while I was shut up in the siege, Massingham had honourably resigned rather than support Chamberlain's war policy, a new editor had been appointed, and at the first possible opportunity I was made to feel the difference. I had worked hard during the siege, had sent out long messages by Kaffirs, who sometimes got through, and had signalled by the helio as many words as were permitted whenever the sun and Headquarters allowed. I half expected a telegram of congratulation on my survival, if not on my work. But when I telegraphed for instructions, saying I supposed I had better go with the others to the Free State front, I was answered by sneers, taunts, complaints, and orders to return to Ladysmith and attach myself to Buller. Telegrams in that tone were three times repeated, and then I began to realise the distinction between one editor and another, and to understand that the greatness of a paper depends upon its editor alone. It is true that the

new editor did not know that my long account of the relief had been stolen, nor did I know it at the time. But to sneer and taunt and send me back to Ladysmith was no proof of sympathetic imagination.

There was no help for it ; so back I went to that sphere of ghosts, after a bare week's enjoyment of beds with sheets, and bread with butter, and bathing without shells. In Ladysmith, now haunted by the spirits of so many friends, and by the memories of so many terrible events, I was kept for two months longer, almost alone and almost idle. Nor was it only ghosts that pervaded the hideously familiar scene. The whole place reeked of death's smell, while enteric and dysentery increased rather than diminished.

Almost as hard to bear as the circumambient atmosphere of death and ghosts was the uncomfortable atmosphere surrounding Buller and his Staff. It gave me the feeling one has upon entering a house inhabited by a man and woman long married and long hostile. Up at his quarters, in the old hospital on the top of the hill above the town, I could see Buller sitting silent, grumpy, and irritable as a worried bear. His was a peculiar nature. His very name inspired confidence ; so did his heavy impenetrable face, and his back like a mountain-side. The Boers called him "The Red Bull," and also compared him, as he ran to and fro up and down the Tugela, to a big rat trying to get into a barn. It must have been a strange scene when, after failing with heavy loss at Colenso, and failing again with heavy loss at Spion Kop, he made a speech to his army as it stood drawn up in hollow square on January 29. There he sat, impassive and unstirred, with all his failures thick upon him. He began to speak. The sentences came blundering out, abrupt, disconnected, ungrammatical. He said something about thanks, and something about the discovery of a key. Yes, his men "had helped him to the discovery of a key?" Not a soul present knew what he meant, nor has anyone since found out his meaning. To the whole of his army the speech was

unintelligible ; he might as well have been speaking Zulu. But that made no difference. The men received those halting meaningless words with an outburst of applause such as rewards no eloquence. Inspired with an enthusiasm of devotion unreasoning as a lover's, off the army set to lay down their lives for their General in his next deadly failure, which began next day.

Time after time Buller allowed himself to be elated or depressed—especially depressed. But after his ultimate success in raising the siege, it is hard to understand why he sat so sulky there among his Staff, uttering hardly a growl. Perhaps it was the same reason that made him ignore White upon the triumphal entry. He had expected to be Commander-in-Chief during the war. His plan of campaign for a march upon Bloemfontein and Pretoria was thwarted by the necessity of relieving Ladysmith, and when that took so long a time, the Government sent Roberts out in full command. The subordination was bitter ; and there Buller sat and glared, triumphant and disheartened.

I, too, sat disconsolate, waiting on events. I supposed, no doubt rightly, that Buller was kept inactive until his advance into the Transvaal should coincide with Lord Roberts' advance from Bloemfontein towards Pretoria, though many maintained we were doomed to stop where we were, with our army of 35,000 men, till Roberts had occupied the capital and made peace. But suddenly, on May 3, I received a telegram with one of those orders that fill a correspondent's heart with amused dismay. It instructed me to join Roberts at Bloemfontein by crossing direct into the Orange Free State, without going round by the coast to a British base. The only direct routes from Ladysmith into the Free State were either by way of Van Reenen's Pass to Harrismith, which the Boers held in force ; or by climbing the precipices of the Drakensberg into Basutoland and trying to elude the Boers upon the Free State frontier there—which meant eluding De Wet ! It was the sort of

instruction that looks so simple and natural in Fleet Street. Similar instructions used to reach me in Sofia during the Balkan War of 1912, when at two in the morning a crash would come at my door : " Telegram ! Telegram ! " and I would read : " Send full column on fighting," when the fighting had not even begun, and the Bulgarian H.Q. Staff kept us all fifty miles behind the future front.

It was somewhere in South Africa that a true Englishman told me he always turned his shirt inside out and back again every day ; for, referring to lice, he added, " It's the return journey as breaks their little hearts ! " It is ignorant instructions that break a correspondent's little heart, and my proposal to obey them created such laughter at Headquarters that for one afternoon they seemed quite cheerful. Though always inclined to obedience, I was not such a fool as to hand my paper's correspondent over to the enemy, and so I went in all haste to Durban again. But finding no ship was to sail for over a week, I took the opportunity of seeing something of Zululand, and even that glimpse was worth the while. Crossing the old Tugela, I mounted Her Majesty's mailbags and drove with eight horses through low hills and scattered bush for about thirty miles to Eshowe, the station of our Resident, Mr. Saunders, Governor of the best English type, sympathetic, hard-working, inflexibly just, and above suspicion. Round him was gathered a little colony of English people, and on the first day that I was there they opened a tin house as Club, with a little reading-room and largish bar, capable of extension.

At last I got away from Durban ; but I had to disembark at East London, and was kept there for some days owing to the usual troubles over passes and transport. Perhaps even those troubles were a kind of blessing deeply disguised, for I was overcome by a ghastly attack of what the doctors called " malarial or famine jaundice," which I count among the most wretched diseases in the world. For more than a fortnight it kept me deeply miserable, but though the doctors

foretold all manner of deaths, I overcame it at last by living on nothing but "Brand's Extract" of beef, and by persistently moving on whenever possible. By train I crept through Stormberg (where Gatacre's fine energy had involved disaster) and Burghersdorp (enthusiastically Boer), to Bloemfontein, where I found that Roberts had gone far ahead with the army, and Kitchener refused permission for anything but food to follow by train. Buying the last cart, the last horse, and the last can of milk, I started to follow in pursuit, and in the end I overtook Roberts in Johannesburg, having covered the three hundred miles in ten days. It was a difficult trek. Two of the horses died ; once the dissel-boom (pole) of the cart broke in half ; food for the horses and the two men fell short (happily I was too ill to want any for myself) ; sometimes we could find no water ; and sometimes we had to trek far into the night, smelling our way by the carcasses of horses strewn along the route where the army had passed. Here and there we came up with various bodies and details on the way—the Berkshire Mounted Infantry, Lovat's Scouts, Lumsden's Horse, Canadian Horse, Brabant's Horse, Australian Roughriders, and so on, besides people of importance such as the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Airlie, who was hurrying to his death at Diamond Hill.

On June 1st I crossed the Vaal, by Viljoen's Drift at Vereeniging. I was three days behind the army, and the trek had been hard and painful. But what were my pains to compare with the torture of the army transport ? In the official history of the war we read : " In May, 44,000 men and 203 guns were disposable for the advance to Pretoria. On the 27th the main body crossed the Vaal." To me those simple words call up a vision of loose sand over which for ten miles the heavy guns and supply waggons had to be dragged before the river was reached. I wonder if more suffering was ever crowded into so short a space.

On June 2nd I rode straight through Johannesburg,

which appeared to me a city much like Hell or South Staffordshire, except that the refuse-heaps were white instead of black. And late at night I came to Orange Grove, where Roberts had pitched his headquarters, outside the town on the Pretoria road.

Moving forward with the firing-line that day and the next, I was well up for the start into Pretoria on June 5. But early that morning an open four-wheeler drove up, flying a white flag, and two Boer civilian officials made the surrender of the city in due form. The Coldstream Guards, followed by the Grenadier Guards, marched in at once to protect the public buildings and to prevent disturbance. Going with them, I entered the main square, which is surrounded by the Government Buildings, the Post Office, the Raad House, the Dutch Church, and Banks. There I was at once encompassed by an inquisitive but apprehensive crowd, who had heard horrible stories of the atrocities committed by British troops in Bloemfontein and Johannesburg—pitiless executions, violation of women, mutilation of children. Nothing worse had ever been said of Turks in all their savagery, and such tales are invariably spread in war-time to encourage resistance or revenge, without which war could hardly continue ; for the military spirit must always be nurtured upon the lies recently known as “propaganda.” But seeing me seated in their midst, apparently quite harmless, the populace began pressing food from their pockets upon me, and drinks, and dozens of cigarettes, as though to propitiate the wrath of the God of Empire, at the same time imploring me to allow them a return home, and to protect their property from plunder. As they insisted upon taking me for the Commanding Officer, I reassured them as best I could in a mixture of English and German, and continued to ride slowly about among the crowd till Roberts should arrive.

At two o'clock the dispositions were complete, the great square cleared, and the Grenadier Guards set to guard the

route with fixed bayonets. A body of Mounted Infantry, headed by Walker of the 42nd, who was Staff Signalling Officer in Ladysmith days, cantered across the square, and Lord Roberts was seen coming down the broad street from the station. He wore the ordinary khaki uniform and helmet, and rode a restless little Arab. For the first time I noticed a look of age upon him as he took the salutes of the battalions marching past. But his interest did not flag, and he never moved his eyes off the men, appearing to examine each battalion with an affectionate care, very different from Kitchener's massive indifference, and from the general boredom of the other Staff Officers. He was standing opposite the main entrance to the Government Buildings, a pseudo-classic edifice three stories high, with a big cupola and clock, surmounted by a gilded statue of a woman armed with helmet and battle-axe, perhaps intended for Justice, but serving almost equally well for Britannia. Across the face of the building ran the motto, "Eendragt maakt Magt," and above it arose a white flagstaff. Before the march past began, two officers stood on a balcony over the door busy with ropes. There was an absolute silence on the square, the men standing with shouldered arms and fixed bayonets. Presently the ropes began to move, and a little bit of silk went fluttering up to the top of the pole and stuck there, lapping itself round a rope so that it could hardly be seen. But it was the emblem of Empire. "General Salute. Present Arms!" The Guards played the National Anthem. All saluted in perfect silence. "Shoulder Arms! Order Arms!" The cheers broke out, soldiers hoisting their helmets on their bayonets, shouting and cheering again and again.

To occupy the enemy's capital has always been considered the chief objective in war, and when we slept in Pretoria that night after the occupation, many thought the fighting was over. I was under no such illusion. The very next day I wrote to my paper :

“ Kruger (if he has not already departed for Holland) has at least 15,000 men with him, they say ; he has twenty guns, nearly three millions in gold, and a religious conviction that God must of necessity be on his side. With forces such as those, it seems possible that the extraordinary old man may give us a lot of trouble for some time yet.”

For nearly two years longer he was to give us a lot of trouble—he and Louis Botha, who was in command of those 15,000 men that had escaped from Pretoria a day or two before we entered ; and De Wet, who was already harassing our lines of communication (not a very difficult task, for our lines from the Cape stretched over a thousand miles and ran through a hostile country). But my opinion, though justified, was very unacceptable to men and editors. The men were “ fair fed up.” As Thucydides noticed, it is always hard to get men to risk their lives if victory seems assured, and when within a week the order for further advance was given, I saw many break down and cry as they marched.

We were going out to the two-days' battle generally known as “ Diamond Hill,” a long and indecisive endeavour to cut off part of the main Boer force holding a line of hills on the Delagoa railway some fifteen miles east of Pretoria and defending the retirement of the main body towards Middleburg, Lydenburg, and the unknown mountains of the Zoutpansberg, where savages dwelt. It was on the first day of this engagement (June 11) that Lord Airlie was killed, leading his 12th Lancers in one of those crazy charges against strongly held positions by which the cavalry sometimes attempted to justify their existence in that war, as I was to see them attempt it with more atrocious disaster along the Roye road in August 1918. But besides the disaster of that charge, the points I chiefly remember during those long days of frost and burning sun and wearing hunger, were, first, a conversation I had with some of the C.I.V. (City Imperial Volunteers) as we rested in dead ground before the assault

upon the final position, and they told me with pride that owing to the war "their horizon had been extended." This was likely, for they had all been bank clerks before they enlisted, and one of them, poor fellow ! had his horizon either obscured or incalculably extended a few minutes later by a bullet in the brain. And, secondly, as I lay there, Ian Hamilton rode up on an objectionably conspicuous white horse, and recognising me from Ladysmith days, politely offered to explain the situation, as he was in command of this right flank in the attack. Leaving his horse (that was some concession) he led me up to the summit of the ridge, and standing almost unnecessarily just on the skyline he proceeded with his explanation, while I, in regard for his rank and his courtesy, was compelled to stand beside him, though shells and bullets were reiterating the most unpleasant sounds close around us, and I only longed to sink behind the alluring rocks. This I did the moment his instructive lecture upon tactics was concluded, and I heard afterwards that the next minute one of his shoulder-straps was carried away by a fragment of shell. How far he was conscious of fear at the time I could not say, but if he was conscious at all, he concealed fear better than anyone I have known. The third point I remember is my long struggle all the way back to Pretoria in utter darkness, through unknown and difficult country, leading the remarkably intelligent horse I had acquired during the siege of Ladysmith, who told me, in his considerate manner, that he was really very sorry but if I mounted him he would fall down dead.

So far as I was concerned, that ended the actual campaign, for the new editor would not believe my report, but, like most other people, thought the war was "practically" over, and recalled me to England; "practically," with its ugly twin sister, "virtually," being among the curses of English public life. So I left Pretoria on June 21 and through intense cold rode to Johannesburg, where I was compelled to sell my talking horse, because the R.T.O. refused him a ticket.

A war horse in Virgil wept thick tears as he followed his young hero's bier, but mine showed more self-restraint and wept inwardly alone when I patted his neck and shook his solid hand for the last time. It took me nine days to reach Cape Town, but in that beautiful country of mountain and sea and flowers I was happy to be held up for nearly a fortnight longer. Almost every day I escaped from mankind far along the coast or up among the precipices ; but also I met several people of fame or importance, and wrote an article upon the "Lessons of the War," which was published over the signature of myself and my colleague, M. H. Donohue, who had also been recalled.

The burning of farms and villages out on the veldt, away from the railways, had just been ordered by Lord Roberts ; it must be remembered that by Dutch law half the farm is the wife's private property ; that the wives, especially during the war, had remained in sole control of the land, and had managed the children, the Kaffirs, and the cattle ; and that most of the Dutch farms contained bits of furniture and other beautiful treasures brought long ago from Holland, and not to be replaced by any money. No wonder that indignation ran high. Mrs. Sauer presided at a women's meeting, and though a few Englishwomen were present, the audience was mainly Dutch. The third speaker rose amid the breathless silence of expectation. I described her at the time as "a short, heavy, brown-eyed woman, but when she began to speak she was transfigured." Indeed, though she stood perfectly still, she was transfigured into flame. Indignation can make the dumb to speak and stones be eloquent. But this woman was not dumb, and was no stone. I have heard much indignant eloquence, but never such a molten torrent of white-hot rage. It was overwhelming. When it suddenly ceased, the large audience—about 1,500 men and women—could hardly gasp. If Olive Schreiner (for, of course, it was she) had called on them to storm the Government House, they would have thrown themselves upon the bayonets.

Perhaps fortunately (I am not sure) she called on them only to follow her on a deputation to Milner. At that moment, I think, the spectacle of indignation rushing upon death might possibly have moved the English people to compel the reversal of farm-burning, and so have averted the subsequent abomination of the Concentration Camps. But I was soon to discover that, during war-time, hardly anything that
✓ can possibly happen will open the minds of any nation to justice or truth or compassion, and that discovery has held good in all subsequent wars. In any case, Milner refused to receive the deputation, and nothing was accomplished except an intensification of righteous and powerless rage.

CHAPTER X

INEXTRICABLE ERROR

WHEN I RETURNED from my first journey to South Africa, the crisis at the *Daily Chronicle* office was already a thing of the past. It had been over nine or ten months. Massingham, who had raised the paper to such power, had been superseded by an editor who had previously held a subordinate position in the office. The rest of the old staff, almost without exception, had resigned and were scattered, some taking shelter, like Massingham himself, on the *Manchester Guardian*, which stood as the City of Refuge for the honourable journalist in flight from the children of wrath ; and, indeed, it was almost the only refuge, for Chamberlain could boast that but for the *Guardian* and the *Morning Leader*, the whole Press supported him. Amid arms not only laws are silent, but so is reason. Or, if she utters her voice, she is so hounded, harried, buffeted, mocked, reviled, persecuted, derided, and condemned that the reasonable man, if he is wise, will hide himself under the shadow of any inconspicuous rock until the tyranny be over-passed. The worst of it is that the reasonable man is often so unwise as to believe in reason as being the chief guide in human affairs, whereas she can hardly be called a guide at all. She rarely leads in ordinary life, and in war-time never. Fear, passion, hatred, ignorance, patriotism, profit, and love of relations all beat her easily in the race, even if she also runs. It was open to me to be silent, as others were silent, but I had not the wisdom. I felt like Job ; “ If I held my tongue, I should give up the ghost ” ; I should lose my vital spirit and sink into the lethargy which is double death. Still, in those days,

comparatively ignorant of Fleet Street, I believed that reason had only to make her voice heard and she would prevail. Or, again, it was open to me to go out into the wilderness, following many friends ; but the City of Refuge was crowded up, and there was no other place from which to make the voice of reason heard. What I still marvel at, some of my best friends, who were themselves haunting the desert, entreated me to remain inside their former fold, so that one reasonable voice at least might be heard from it. How experienced and high-minded men and women came to make such a mistake, I cannot understand ; for to me their error is obvious now, and it was then almost fatal. All manner of lower motives, no doubt, combined with these to allure me down to spiritual destruction—my natural indolence and abhorrence of change, my friendship for two or three members of the new Staff, a pardonable dislike of “ crankiness,” and an unpardonable fear of hunger for myself and others. Besides, I always hoped for some way of escape. Month after month I struggled for escape, and four or five times a way appeared to be opening, only suddenly to close. The final issue into the sane and sunlit world was three years in coming, and all that time I lay in hell, hardly allowed even such annual privileges of revisiting the upper air as were granted to Judas himself.

But, indeed, my private records of those many months sound such depths of misery that perhaps it is better to remember only brief glimmers of alleviation. I returned to an office haunted by the shadows of former greatness when the whole Staff had worked together as one soul for the honour of the paper in which we gloried most when the enemy raged furiously against it. The whole tone of the leading articles and their policy was now changed. Instead of attack, we had defence ; instead of exuberant exaltation, we were chastened into soothing mediocrity ; instead of battling against the storm, we were instructed only to “ keep an even keel.” We were neither for God nor for His

enemies, though we gradually inclined towards the latter, as being always the more popular cause. To proclaim abroad the reversal of policy upon the burning issue of the time, someone had designed two posters that flared in succession upon every hoarding. One represented a yellow lion attacked by two little wild boars, and contending against them with uncalled-for desperation. The other represented the same yellow lion roaring in triumph over the two little boars which lay dead and bleeding at his feet. I had seen one of those cartoons in Cape Town, and a typical Colonial Imperialist had said to me, "Look here ! What are your people up to ? You seem to forget that we shall have to live side by side with these bloody Boers ! " Which was about the most sensible remark I ever heard from a man of his kind. I do not know who was responsible for the abominations ; perhaps a man in the office who was afterwards murdered, I am sure for some far less serious offence, poor fellow ! Certainly the new editor was not responsible, and his expressions of genuine regret unhappily confirmed me in my disastrous decision to try what my influence could do towards restoring a finer policy.

To this hope I was further encouraged by the presence upon the new Staff of my former friend, L. F. Austin, and my new friend, Clarence Rook, both quietly indifferent to great questions of policy, it is true, but both men of singular sweetness, urbanity, and gentle cynical humour. Another gentle and reasonable person, named Sargant, had also come as leader-writer—so gentle that I thought he would never turn in wrath, until he turned. But already the germs of fatal disease were working upon him, and though during his last fatal illness he was graciously set to write eight columns of " Obituaries," to keep his spirits up, he faded out of the world, rather rapidly in the end. Lipsett was another leader-writer, experienced in India, a reasonable politician, but far from being too gentle to turn. Finally, in April 1901, E. T. Cook came as chief leader-writer, having just before been

driven from the editorship of the *Daily News*, owing to its purchase by the "Pro-Boers," who appointed R. C. Lehmann to a short-lived office. Cook was one for whom, like everyone else, I had felt extraordinary respect ever since I had known him as President of the Oxford Union. I had met him occasionally while he edited the *Pall Mall*, the *Westminster*, and the *Daily News* in turn, and my respect had always increased. I knew him to be a man of extraordinary knowledge, of sensitive justice, and capable of unusual generosity, which his natural shyness concealed under a frosty and even repellent manner. So warm-hearted, in fact, was the nature hidden behind that unemotional face and those chilling grey eyes, that he allowed his feeling of friendship sometimes to influence his political sense, and even his sense of justice, as was seen in his unwavering support of Milner in the South African controversy. Yet no one has stated Milner's and Chamberlain's case with more judicial fairness and generous allowance for the passion of national freedom on the other side. When such a man became our colleague, it was surely possible for any reasonable man to stand at his side without shame, and even with hope. But for me it was not possible.

One of my delightful moments in relief came on June 19, 1901, not long after Cook had joined the Staff. There was a great peace meeting—that is to say a "Pro-Boer" meeting—in Queen's Hall, and a violently hostile crowd was gathered outside, filling all the streets of approach. It so happened that I went with Professor James Sully, the psychologist, and Mrs. Sully, a woman of conspicuous beauty who never recovered from her savage treatment by the mob as we fought our way in. Notwithstanding these terrors, the Hall was crowded with a sympathetic audience, and Lloyd George, who was the chief speaker, received an inspiring welcome from all of us, since we recognised in him the rising hope of our defiant and rebellious party. His speech was one of the finest I have heard, and in those days

he was exactly the man for the occasion—courageous, enthusiastic, indifferent to consequences. His eloquence appeared to soar ever upward and upward, like an eagle's flight when he rises in vast and spiral curves. It was indeed a superb display of oratorical power, and the cause was great, the enemy only the more violent because half-conscious of their shame. When at last he concluded, and the whole audience rose in an ecstasy of applause, I hastened to emerge, so as to reach the *Chronicle* office in time for the night's work. But the police stopped me at the doors leading into the little cul-de-sac at the back of the Hall. "You'll certainly be killed if you go out," they said. "I can't help that," I answered; "I have to get to my work in Fleet Street." "Well," said one of them, with sudden ingenuity, "I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll pretend you are being thrown out for creating a disturbance in a Pro-Boer Meeting. We must offer you some show of violence, but you mustn't mind that." So I pretended to struggle, and they did offer me some show of violence—a considerable show, banging me about the head and shoulders with all their constabulary strength, and taking the opportunity to give vent to their political convictions at the same time.

Escaping from the shelter of their blows, I faced the tempest of a shrieking mob. Were they taken in by the ingenious ruse? Not a bit of it. As Browning said, "No Britons to be baulked." They rushed upon me like a pack of hounds when their fangs are bared for the dying fox. In a moment my hat flew over their heads, my coat was rent in half, my collar and shirt dragged open. With screams and yells they informed me that I was a "Pro-Boer," as if I did not know that already! Happily for me, they stood so thick that only a few could strike at once. In what appeared an infinite distance, I saw a 'bus going down Great Portland Street, and I savagely fought my way towards it. Clinging to its rail, I began to climb up, as to an ark of salvation. But thereupon the women seated on the top shrilled and

cried, "Here's one of them!" or "Here's another of them!" just as though they had detected a bug or a flea. Indeed, if I had been a mouse itself, they could not have displayed more abhorrence and animosity. They struck at my head as it appeared above the level, with the handles of their umbrellas and parasols, in those days heavily weighed with large agate knobs. They spat in my face, and strove to wrench my fingers from the rail as I climbed. The Mænads tearing in pieces the enchanting son of the Muse herself were not more intoxicated with fury, and from that moment I never questioned women's political zeal and their right to give it constitutional expression.

Torn, bleeding, and but half-clothed, I arrived like a ship-wrecked mariner in the office, and went into the editor's room to have my subject for a leader as usual. Cook happened to be there on the same errand, and both he and the editor contemplated my condition with some astonishment. I explained where I had been. "You went as a sympathiser, I suppose?" asked the editor with indignant scorn. "Certainly," I replied, "and I have learnt how right Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* was when he advised one never to go battling for truth and justice in one's best trousers!" Cook turned away in pained silence, and I think the editor said nothing beyond suggesting a subject for a leader; but, naturally, our relationship became more and more strained, and at length an unendurable atmosphere of mutual disagreement and suspicion was developed, affecting even the literary page, which I strove to keep up to its high standard of excellence day by day.

These years brought me a few new friends and a crowd of new acquaintances. My work as literary editor opened to me a little circle of gay and witty people, including Clarence and Clare Rook, L. F. Austin, Lewis Hind, and a few more, all characterised by a delightful tolerance and an affectation of cynical urbanity. With them were connected the humorous and indignant spirit of Evelyn Sharp, who, though urbane,

never affected anything ; and Alice Meynell, the poet, sober and austere, who in a seemingly affected courtesy revealed her true nature. And beside her were her sons and daughters, displaying a similar grace, not only towards herself, but, to my astonishment, even towards each other. Le Gallienne, also well known in that circle, sometimes came to the office, too, always amusing me with his solemn and serious greeting of " Brother Poet," though at that time I had published hardly any verse. And in the same years I became acquainted through Alice Bird (" Lallah ") and Arnold White, with Beatrice Harraden, already famous for her *Ships That Pass in the Night* ; and through Alice Bird with May Sinclair, then on the road to fame with her *Divine Fire*.

At least equally interesting to me at the time was my acquaintance with Gordon Craig, who was living a *vie de Bohème* in company with Martin Shaw, now well known as musician and composer. We were all very full of " The Drama " then, chiefly, so far as I was concerned, owing to Mrs. N. F. Dryhurst's gallant and almost successful attempts to instil something of her own impetuous enthusiasm into her students at an evening class in a Highbury Board School. And there was Gordon Craig himself, living in the very midst of us, teeming with the ideas that have transfigured the stage of Europe—ideas on acting, speaking, management, and especially on scenery, which he reduced to that superb simplicity now imitated in Berlin, Moscow, Rome, and even in London by men who have fed fat upon his genius. With the support of his mother, he launched out into performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and *The Masque of Dionysus* (March 1901).

I think Gordon Craig's efforts to introduce beauty upon the London stage had only two other direct results—one a performance of *Acis and Galatea* (March 1902), which had to be withdrawn after two or three days, I believe for want of money to pay the actors. Some years afterwards, when he was known throughout Europe, a great dinner was given

in his honour, with Yeats and other sympathetic speakers eulogising his work ; and about the same time he showed me, upon a little model of a theatre, his imaginative designs for Tree's performance of *Macbeth* ; but, owing to some quarrel, even that work of genius was never seen, and all his extraordinary powers have remained a mine for others to exploit to their own advantage. In those earlier days Yeats was closely connected with him in mind, and the same love of the drama and beautiful presentation led me to meet Yeats as often as possible, and to attend his lectures and speeches, even on magic. From one lecture on magic (May 4, 1901), though the greater part of it slid over me, I remember that, in answer to some question, he spoke of his own habit of vacillation—how when tortured by this curse he would try to cleanse his mind (I think by fasting and similar means), and when he had reasoned the matter out and made a decision in his best and purest mood, he never allowed any subsequent mood to alter his decision in practice, though his mind would often continue to sway. He also said, "When two are speaking there is always a third, and in every council there is one for whom no chair is set." This ever-present spirit he regarded as a real personality, which would go on living long after the council was dissolved, and to a similar spirit he traced the tendency of many people to write or discover the same things at the same time.

On another occasion when I was dining alone with him and Florence Farr, who was then giving exquisite recitations of his poems, I made the following notes :

"I was dull and frozen as so often now, but Yeats was singularly humane and clear-visioned, talking with wonderful insight upon ordinary affairs—politics, Ireland, the drama, and even gossip. He told some grand stories of a fine old sailor grandfather in Sligo, who had saved ships, keeping the crews quiet with an oar, and was loved by the whole country in spite of his abusive tongue. Also of his

mother's father, or perhaps his own father, who said, when Yeats's poems began to appear, 'I have given a tongue to the sea cliffs!' He spoke, too, of a melancholic uncle who used to be a great hunter, but now thought it wicked to ride and yet was chosen judge at all the horse-shows, and whose one and unanswerable complaint at sixty-five was, 'My dear boy, in ten years I shall be an old man!' Yeats spoke of the old ideal of 'Magnificence,' or splendid personality, as was to be found in the *Faerie Queen*. He talked of Milner and Rosebery as being 'heady,' meaning that their brains did not work better under excitement as Chamberlain's or Tim Healy's did. The 'heady' people have an imagination for the moment, and no real foresight. He gave us a fine description of Healy at Louth, and talked much on Irish politics, deeply regretting the gap of ten years when the young men were turning to mere literature, and the old men were cutting themselves off from the generation."

In his attic in Woburn Buildings I once met the strangely irregular and self-determined writer Standish O'Grady, whom I described as "modestly exuberant; grey hair all on end, ruddy, and very Irish." Yeats admired him as much as any Irish writer, and half in fun called him the "Irish Ruskin," because he had a way of taking extravagant little points and preaching unexpected truths from them. In the same circle I also frequently met an exciting little person, Pamela, or Pixie, Colman Smith, a native of Jamaica, and I suppose touched with negro blood; for, seated on the floor, she would tell unknown negro folk-tales in a charming negro accent and manner. She could draw very beautiful and unexpected things besides, while Yeats would be speaking of all art as an infinitely delicate variety under the appearance of monotony in form. But another of the distinguished people I came to know in those years certainly did not belong to that circle, being of a different type, and

engaged upon very different interests. He was the satirist, critic and man of unrecognised science, Samuel Butler.

I first met him at an Old Salopian dinner, about a year before his death ; for he was a Shrewsbury boy like myself, and he told me he had long watched my writing on that account. He invited me to his well-known rooms in Clifford's Inn, where he lived for thirty-seven years when he was in England, maintaining a daily routine characteristic of his regular nature. The day that I first visited him (in July 1901) he told me he wanted to hear about the war, and called in his trusty servant " Alfred " (Alfred Cathie) to listen. He asked me to explain the siege of Ladysmith, and, having cleared the table, I managed it fairly well with a few heaps of books for hills and matches for the guns on both sides. But we soon drifted on to Homer, and he said, in his half-mocking way, that he didn't care much about poetry, " except, of course, for just the very greatest poets, such as Homer, Shakespeare, and Hood ! " I had foolishly thought him half-mocking in the same manner when he wrote the *Authoress of the Odyssey*, but he was not mocking at all. He was absolutely convinced that a woman had written it. He told me the idea first came to him because Ulysses is represented as having no objection to making love to Circe though she had turned his comrades into swine. " Only a woman would have imagined that—an innocent, ignorant woman ! " " Well ! " I thought within myself, " I am not so sure. Given Circe, I could have made love to her, though she had turned all mankind into swine ! " But I kept silence, being already in danger of offence. For a long review had appeared in the *Chronicle* upon the same acute book of criticism, and as editor I had not only written it but had headed the article " Miss Homer's Work ! " I am sure the review was full of fine appreciation, but he was bitterly vexed at the title (I still think without sufficient reason) and he kept on repeating, " That does me no good ! That does me no good ! " So I was all the more delighted to read, long

after his death in Festing Jones's admirable biography, that Butler had been so pleased with my review of *Erewhon Revisited*, some months later, that he could not resist the temptation of telling his sisters about it, though he knew any success of the book would only irritate them—a characteristic admission; for, indeed, his relations with his own family were unusually disagreeable, as was revealed in his greatest book, *The Way of All Flesh*, published after his death.

In one of these years (1903) I met H. G. Wells for the first time, for he came into the office one night with "his fair-haired little wife," and I just noted that he was "a very attractive man, with shy and humorous grey eyes." I had little knowledge then of his inexhaustible and devastating powers—devastating and fertilising, like the powers of a steam plough, grinding and cleaving along its way through stones and roots and flowers, remorselessly turning up the fallow, destroying the slow and sometimes beautiful growth of ages, and industriously fertilising the ground for future utility, that in time may possibly reveal some element of beauty, too. It was only long afterwards that I comprehended this, as when, at one of the vast assemblies during the Washington Conference of 1921, I realised that the small and inconspicuous figure standing beside me, far at the back and out of sight, was an incalculably greater force than all the orators, generals, statesmen, clergy, and innumerable cheering crowds celebrated by the reporters.

Edward Clodd's invitation at Easter, 1902, began my long and happy series of visits to his well-known Strafford House, at Aldeburgh, looking over the brown North Sea, step-mother of sailors, and to me always full of their bones; all the more since I once lived in the Gamecock Fleet of trawlers above the Dogger Bank. Clodd, whom I have described as "the friend of genius and the genius of friendship," certainly had an unrivalled power of gathering around him many of the most conspicuous men, whether of science or letters. On that first visit I found James Sutherland Cotton,

once editor of the *Academy*, and afterwards occupied upon his great *Gazetteer of India*, together with Professor Haddon, the anthropologist, one of my best contributors to the "literary page." That was a good visit, but of still finer interest was another (May 30, 1903) of which I find the following notes :

"Reached Clodd about seven, and was much welcomed. Was almost at once introduced to Thomas Hardy ; not a big man, nor 'virile,' nor countrified. Face a peculiar grey-white like an invalid's or one soon to die ; with many scattered red marks under the skin, and much wrinkled—sad wrinkles, thoughtful and pathetic, but none of power or rage or active courage. Eyes bluish grey and growing a little white with age, eyebrows and moustache half light brown, half grey. Head nearly bald on top, but fringed with thin and soft light hair. The whole face giving a look of soft bonelessness, like an ageing woman's. Figure spare and straight ; hands very white and soft and loose-skinned. He was quite silent at first, sitting sadly and taking no notice of the converse. Then he began to speak a little, attempting no phrase or eloquence as Meredith does, but just stating his opinion or telling some reminiscence or story—always a little shyly, like a country cousin among rapid Londoners. He talked a good deal about General Pitt-Rivers, his wife and daughters, such as Lady Grove. But he spoke also of early days in Dorset, when life was so much fuller and more various, chiefly owing to the system of holding cottages on three lives—'liviers,' the tenants were called—which gave a permanency and personal interest to the place. Now the Cockney's idea that all country people are agricultural labourers is almost true. He himself was born only just in time to catch the relics of the old days.

"As I expected, he spoke much about the hangman ; also about the horrible scenes at public floggings on a waggon

in the market-place, and how a cruel hangman would wait between each lash to let the flesh recover its feeling, while he squeezed the blood off the thongs ; and how some soldiers once saw this and forced the man to go quicker. Also how, before his time, little children used to be flogged through the streets behind a cart for stealing a penny book or toy. He had stories of magic as well ; the woman who dreamt another woman sat on her chest and clawed her arm, and the other woman came next day to be healed of a terrible red mark on her arm, of which she ultimately died. He wrote a story on it for Leslie Stephen, who, however, insisted upon having a material explanation. I thought I remembered it in *Wessex Tales*, but am not sure. He spoke also of the custom still surviving that the man who kills a pig cuts out a nice little piece and eats it raw.

“ This, of course, roused Haddon and the rest to scientific discourse on the rites of propitiation. For Haddon was there, bubbling over with Primitive Culture ; also a fine fellow, Hugh Clifford, who has been out governing the Malay Peninsula for some twenty years—a strong face, with huge chin and bright brown eyes, talking freely and with power, full of knowledge and interest on all manner of strange subjects. And Flinders Petrie was there, too, with his Assyrian face, oriental nose and eyes, skin and beard and manner—evidently Greek, one would suppose, though said to be a mere Scot. He speaks with high-pitched voice, screwing up one eye for emphasis. He has not much laughter in him, and sometimes sat mum as if contemptuous, though he talked well on the course of civilisation. He thinks the present is easier to understand than the past. Loves all history, and not only his own special period, and always stays awhile in Italy every year on his way to or from Egypt. He thinks we are now in a kind of Hadrian time, and a great invasion of Russians and Chinese mixed will pour over Europe, perhaps in the form of cheap labour, teaching us the uses of monotony. For he thinks the European is still

a savage in his love of variety. All this appeared to me hateful, but it was cleverly done, though without humour. Next day, when up at Iken in the old 'Lotus,' Hugh Clifford told me of some Malay chiefs whom he had brought over for the Coronation, and how one day he found one of them tramping up and down his bedroom. 'I am walking from P. to Y.,' he said, mentioning two beautiful villages in his own land. 'And now I am going up Koli hill,' and therewith he panted and began to walk with effort. He had to be sent home soon after, for very homesickness."

For myself, by far the most vital external event in those years was the discovery of my son Richard's love of drawing and capacity for imagining scenes in uncommon forms. He was then about thirteen and I recognised with apprehension that he would become an artist or nothing. With apprehension, because the life of an artist, as of most novelists and poets, is likely to be solitary, self-centred and isolated from mankind. Soon afterwards, most unhappily, I was induced to send him to a Public School for three years, and I might just as well have sent him for three years to hell. Once or twice I went down to play the displeasing part of the indignant parent, but it is useless to try changing the tone of a school from the outside. I offered to remove him to Shrewsbury, where my old friends among the masters would have helped him, but he preferred to "stick it," and very likely the school was not in itself much worse than the average public school for a boy whose main interest lay in art. Indeed, one can imagine no more fatal characteristic for ensuring the contempt or detestation of boys and our ordinary masters alike. The drawing master, it is true, was enthusiastic, but it took the boy long to recover his natural high spirits and sunny temper. And it seems to me a terrible thing that any boy, however unusual and incomprehensible his inclination, should look back upon his

school days with horror, and only wish to blot them out of his memory, after having in three years, at great expense, learnt nothing.

Two of my numerous visits to Ireland also fall within this period. The first was to witness a special Convention of the United Irish League (Dec. 11, 1900), when for the first time I met John Dillon, whom I have since always called upon with melancholy pleasure whenever I have been in Dublin. For no one has played a finer part in upholding the cause of Irish freedom—and of freedom for other countries than Ireland—in the past, and no one has stood as a more admirable but pathetic figure while the stream of political time swept past him. I also heard Douglas Hyde speak at the Gaelic League (of which he was the founder and the spirit), side by side with Kuno Meyer, the great Celtic scholar, and my friend of many years before.

The next time I went to Ireland (February 1903) my purpose was to study the difficult question connected with George Wyndham's beneficent Land Purchase Bill of that year. I worked at them with the patient zeal of married Fabians resolved upon propagating a little Blue Book. I read innumerable reports, and crowded my head with myriad figures of pounds and acres and percentages and stocks. For many weeks I laboured at arithmetic in its most complicated forms, rejoicing beyond measure when two calculations which ought to have coincided exactly showed comparatively little divergence. And in the end I got the provisions of the Bill and its probable advantages to landlord and purchasers fairly correct, as could be seen in my article upon the subject in the *Contemporary Review* of March in that year, if anyone cared to look it up. But the statistics have now gone as ghostly as the cohorts of Assyria, and I care to recall only the personalities of the distinguished and lovable men who then gave me the generous assistance that the Irish people have never failed to give, alien and ignorant as I was.

CHAPTER XI

THE END OF AN EPOCH

IN THE SPRING OF 1902 it seemed likely that I should gain my desired transference to the *Daily News*, on which A. G. Gardiner, my editor and admired friend in after years, had lately succeeded Lehmann. But the sudden dismissal of Herbert Paul on April 1—dismissal by a letter left upon his desk after twenty years of constant service—altered both the situation and my own desire. I believe the cause was a violent article written by Paul in condemnation of Cecil Rhodes after his death, which had occurred only about a fortnight before ; but it was the manner of dismissing a man of such distinction and such devoted service that was horrible. I am sure that Gardiner himself had nothing to do with it, but there was a power on that paper behind the editor, as I was myself to discover in 1909. So I thought no more about it, after the first disappointment of seeing another possibility of escape vanish like the rest.

By that time it was evident that the Boer War could not last much longer. In January 1901, the old Queen had died, uttering, as was reported, a lament over the war, almost with her last words. It was natural that her successor, who paid such attention to ceremony, should wish to celebrate his coronation amid the rejoicings of peace restored. And it was well known that Lord Kitchener, commanding in South Africa, desired peace on terms, though Milner stood for unconditional surrender. So in the third week of April 1902, I asked Frank Lloyd, the chief proprietor and director of the *Chronicle*, to allow me to go out again for the approaching Peace, and, to my astonishment, he agreed at once.

I found the line from Cape Town to Pretoria defended by rather feeble entanglements, and by blockhouses at intervals of a mile or two, looking like little Chinese pagodas, and carefully decorated, in the British manner, with flowers, ironic names of blissful habitations, and ferocious dummies. Here and there I passed various kinds of camps—military, refugee, Kaffir, and hospital camps, like the one at Deelfontein, where my old Commanding Officer, Colonel Albert Salmond, then lay dying of wounds, though his nurse, whom I happened to meet on the platform, said he was fast recovering. Passing the drift at Vereeniging, where I was not allowed to get out because the Boer leaders were there in conference, I reached Pretoria, on May 17, for the third time. There I stayed, anxiously watching from day to day the long-drawn-out uncertainty of peace.

I have forgotten who gave me the opportunity (perhaps John Buchan, one of the cleverest in Milner's "Kindergarten"), but one evening came an invitation to call upon Milner himself. So I crawled out of bed (fever as usual), and up to the former Residency in Sunnyside, which Milner then occupied. It was on May 27—only four days before the Peace was concluded—and yet he conversed with me long and with the greatest freedom. My general impression was of a perfectly honourable and very sensitive nature, rather inclined to introspection and examination of his own motives ; perhaps inclined to exaggerate himself generally, like a man always standing on the defensive, without the calm assurance and unquestioning belief in his cause of a born conqueror.

Ian Hamilton occupied the next house to Kitchener's headquarters, and on his balcony most of the famous Boer generals and statesmen might often be seen—Louis Botha, Christian De Wet, Delarey, Schalk Burger, Lucas Meyer, and Smuts—hanging about disconsolately when no conference was sitting, either there or at Vereeniging. After the Peace was signed (at midnight May 31—June 1), I used to

meet most of them in the Transvaal Hotel, and two days later Lucas Meyer invited me to his room. He was a very big, open-faced man, nearly bald, beard nearly white, eyes clear brown, with deep lines under them. I reminded him of the "Mournful Monday" on which he had turned our right at Lombard's Kop outside Ladysmith, and he said he thought that the finest battle of the war. The English had fought splendidly, clinging to their ground in spite of everything. But they were overwhelmed by numbers, and for the Boers it ought to have been a decisive victory. No doubt he was thinking of Joubert and his many failures to follow up success. He thought Colenso was not a battle at all, but a battue, and, after Spion Kop, Buller's army ought to have been annihilated as it recrossed the Tugela.

Three days later (June 6), through Ian Hamilton's good offices, I received a command to call upon Kitchener at his headquarters. On the way I met David Henderson, who was very friendly as usual, and very hopeful about the result of the Peace. When at last I was ushered into Kitchener's presence, I found him large, certainly, but not so fat as I expected. His grey eyes were rather full, the left eye looking a little outwards, and neither of them very bright or impressive ; for which reason, perhaps, he kept turning his head away, and appeared to object to looking straight at me. His manner throughout was nervous, shy, and awkward. He could not decide whether he was talking to me or to Ian Hamilton, who was present. He kept his cap on all the time, hiding his low forehead. His cheeks were wrinkled, but rather puffy, and he showed two deep gashes from abscessed glands. The nose was short, and the chin large and heavy, a very deep cleft between it and the lip ; the mouth entirely hidden by the great black and grey moustache ; a slight double chin already showing. He spoke with much hesitation, and with long pauses of absolute silence. He thought the Peace was really pleasing to both parties, especially to the Boers, who were coming in well from Commando, but

were, naturally, very touchy on what people said about them and the terms. De Wet had been very expressive in his loyalty to the change, declaring that a Boer must be one thing or the other, and now he was a British subject. Kitchener thought the Boers were a very strange people, with strongly mixed qualities, but hoped all would go well if the present feeling were maintained, and there came no frost to blight it. The enemies of to-day had often proved to be the friends of to-morrow. He praised the correspondents (rare and hard praise from him !) and hoped we would understand how necessary his recent strictness in the Censorship had been. Then he said good-bye.

Peace being concluded, I set out at once upon various wanderings of great interest to myself. I visited some of the concentration camps organised for the Boer women and children whose homes on the veldt had been purposely destroyed under military orders. The appalling mismanagement which had raised so just an outcry in the middle of the war had been brought to an end, chiefly through Joseph Chamberlain's energetic action, and the pitiful families were now living as decently and healthily as crowds of women and children can live in long rows of tents upon dust and withered grass. English teachers had come out for a year's term to instruct "the little barbarians" in civilised behaviour, and they described to me their surprise at finding the Boer children much sharper and better mannered than English pupils, far more anxious to learn, and not any more deceitful or wily (*slim*). Full of expectation, all the families were beginning to pack up for the long treks to their ruined homes, and only in one camp did I find any serious complaint. That was at Irene, within a short ride from Pretoria, and there the indignant mothers were raging against a zealous young doctor who was forcibly promoting vaccination, which was mistaken for a Government mark branding the children as future subjects of the Empire.

This did not surprise me, for I had heard people at home

objecting to vaccination on grounds hardly less irrational. More unreasonable to me appeared the mountains of oxen bones and skulls visible at various points upon the veldt, where our soldiers had slaughtered herds of oxen in the hope of starving the Commandos out. The military mind had refused the entreaties of the Boer women in the camps to be allowed to make "biltong," or dried meat, out of the carcasses, which were consequently left to rot, while the women and their families were fed upon canned "bully" from North or South America.

Another visit, of equal though sadder interest, was to the Leper Hospital due west from Pretoria. It was then in charge of Dr. Turner, an enthusiastic student of bacteriology and collector of bacilli, of which he showed me specimens enough to fill the world with plagues. There was one wretched Englishman from my own familiar Shadwell in the hospital, a hopeless case ; but nearly all the patients were Kaffirs of one tribe or another. Some had lost their toes and fingers, some their eyes and lips, others showed frightful developments of the skin, huge protuberances in knobs and wrinkles. Some of the Kaffir women, whose hands and feet had gone, were none the less suckling babies. One little Boer girl, whose father was afflicted with the disease, had secretly been rubbing herself all over with his towel in hopes of catching the infection so that she might not be separated from him, and she was still being kept "under observation," to see whether her desire would be realised. But Dr. Turner himself was far more remarkable than his patients or his bacilli. He was a man of exquisite humour and indomitable devotion. He had even constructed a theatre for the patients and organised a band. He despaired of no one, except the faith-healers, who allowed no treatment. One thing I noticed against him : though he washed me very carefully two or three times, he contented himself with just dabbling his own hands in carbolic or Condy's fluid. As I rode away, his last words to me were : "Now, if

you get leprosy within the next fifteen years, which is always possible, you will know the reason !” More than fifteen years have passed, and no signs of the disease have appeared on me ; but Dr. Turner himself, after he had retired and come back to live in England, died a leper.

Among my journeys from Pretoria at this time were two visits to Lourenço Marques on Delagoa Bay. As I went down the Komati Valley (“ Valley of Death,” as our soldiers stationed there called it), I became acquainted for the first time with the characteristics of low-lying tropical regions in Africa—the peculiar smell of rotting vegetation, the moist atmosphere and intense heat, the interminable bush of stunted and poisonous trees, the brilliant birds and insects, the devouring swarms of locusts, thick as snow in a blizzard, the hornbills pursuing them, the white and languid figures of the few Europeans, and the pervading sense of pestilence. At Komati Port, just inside the Portuguese territory, I perceived an oldish, grey, and stooping figure coming out of a store or office, and shuffling drearily through the burning dust. It was Reitz, at one time President of the Orange Free State, when it ranked among the best-governed countries in the world ; afterwards, in evil hour, State Secretary in Kruger’s Transvaal whence he issued the ultimatum of October 10, 1899. His battered brown hat and grey clothes were burnt and discoloured by sun and weather ; his beard and hair rugged in grey tufts ; his skin baked red as mine. But there was no mistaking the man I had known in the midst of his copious family at his pleasant house in Sunnyside—the deeply marked features, the slightly irritable look, the keen, grey eyes, with their dash of wildness and uncontrol. “ I am sorry,” he said, “ but I don’t remember you. I daresay you have changed. I have changed myself. Yes, I have changed, I have changed !” And repeating these words, rather to himself than to me, he got into the train, and left the South African States for ever. At Delagoa Bay he was the guest of the American Consul.

There he embarked upon a grey German liner for Holland and, as he intended, for Sumatra or some other Dutch Colony. He was a poor man, leaving with clean hands his many opportunities of dubious wealth ; and so, an honourable and tragic figure, he disappeared.

In Lourenço Marques I felt almost as though I were back in old Europe again, for the place is pervaded with ancient history as with "pernicious fever." The brilliantly clad boatmen beside the little pier and out upon the huge triple bay, over which I sailed my boat as on the Mediterranean, were talking modified forms of Homer and Cicero, and their behaviour was almost classic too. But besides the leisurely delights of such a place, I remember with most pleasure my long conversations with our Consul-General, Captain Crowe, R.N., a fine type of the British public servant, large, powerful, full of accurate knowledge and good judgment. Unhappily he was already slowly dying of cancer, which he concealed from all the world. But his still beautiful wife, a Turkish woman whom he had robbed or rescued from a harem, had discovered the truth and mourned without ceasing. He explained to me all the difficulties involved in the Portuguese possession of a great harbour which had suddenly become the natural entrance from the sea into the wealth of Johannesburg. At that time a *modus vivendi* had been concluded between Milner and the Portuguese Governor-General as to the transport supplied and the control of the railway and Customs. The arrangement has no doubt been altered since, and I need not dwell on it, but the other main point in dispute was the supply of "boys" as workers in the mines, and probably that still gives trouble. The "boys" numbered many thousand, and under the *modus vivendi* we had agreed to pay a tax of thirteen shillings a head as import duty. No contract was allowed to last for more than a year, and as a rule each "boy" came home every six months, like the "Kroo boys" on the West Coast. But if the "boy" freely renewed a

contract without returning, we had to pay sixpence a month to the Portuguese as long as he remained at work. That was all very well, but I had no doubt, nor had Captain Crowe any doubt, that the Portuguese obtained the "boys" by bribing the chiefs of the tribes to compel them to go. It was in fact a modified system of slavery, partly to the advantage of the mines, partly to the advantage of the chief, the Portuguese, and the French, who held most of the Portuguese debt. In Captain Crowe's words, "The Portuguese flag can bear it, but ours could not. The Radical papers and the missionaries would go out on the 'dear black brother' line, and all would be ruined." So he went on in his bulldog, official manner, interesting for me to recall, because it was then for the first time that I came across the Portuguese method of securing labour—the method that I was three or four years afterwards to explore in its far more horrible form upon the Portuguese West Coast and in the Cocoa Islands of San Thomé and Principe.

My other most interesting experience in that region of languor and deadly air was due to a walk I took out into the forest, north of the town. In a small but decent hut I there found the priestly Zulu, Mkizi, instructing a little black boy in the art of writing. He was a full-blooded Zulu, though the insides of his hands were light, the points of his fingers and nails reddish, and his tongue a peculiarly light pink. On his table lay a volume of St. Cyprian's works (whatever they are) in the original Greek, together with a *Vetus Testamentum* and the Vulgate. Other Fathers and Westcott's *Sermons* were included in his library. He had been trained at Lincoln Theological College, and knew all about Bishop King, though I think he himself had come under Bishop Smyth. He said he liked training boys for the Church, though he feared most of them would go into business. He took me to see his little church, with its brass crucifix and candles, I suppose in accordance with the Anglican ritual.

But what interested me far more even than his theological

scholarship was his account of his own Zulu people, their customs and beliefs. He said his people thought there was somewhere an unknowable God, the "Very Great," who had created the universe, and then let it go on without further care. Of Him mankind could know nothing. Grown-up people after earthly death lived for a short time, changed into lions, or the best of them into snakes, as I had learnt before. If a family is in misfortune, a witch-doctor names some ancestor who wants a sacrifice, and an animal is then killed, the blood of the liver pressed into a sacred bowl, which is never washed, and the blood left to stand all night. Then the whole family devour the animal, and, I suppose, the ancestor's desires are vicariously appeased. The worship of dead chiefs and distinguished ancestors is the real religion. The witch-doctor can also fix upon a man or woman who has bewitched a sick person (for death before old age is always put down to sorcery). The family asks him to "smell out" the guilty, and he succeeds by knowing the family history and following their applause. They sit round in a circle and say "*Izwa ! Izwa !*" ("Smell him out !")—with indifference if the witch-doctor is "cold" on the scent, passionately and with clapping of hands if he is "warm." If the guilty man is present, all eyes turn on him, which in itself must guide the magician. If he confesses he is killed, or, in these days, more often beaten and fined. The confession is almost always obtained.¹

Witch-doctors can also foretell the future by shuffling knuckle-bones about, and the Anglican Zulu had no doubt of this power, attributing it to the prompting of evil spirits. They can also make rain : really, he thought, by observing the heavens and the winds, and telling the suppliants to come again if dry weather seemed likely to continue. For a really good rain a witch-doctor would get two cows. Most kraals keep a priestess also, who knows the traditional prayers and goes round with a club, beating the huts and

¹ See my story called "*Izwa !*" in *Between the Acts*.

praying to the ancestors. When anyone dies, his hut is left empty for about a year, so that the soul may not be interrupted in its transformation, but then it is burnt ; for if the spirit ever comes back, it naturally objects to seeing the old home in different hands, or smelling the old familiar smells.

Perhaps for fear of sentiment, I kept my return to Natal for the last of my journeys. For nothing encourages sentiment so much as re-visiting places full of memories when all is changed and the friends of old days are dead or gone. Such a scene is indeed a banquet-hall deserted, and it is best to hurry through it. So I started for Natal only when chilly letters began to arrive hinting at my return, and I rushed down through the familiar country, loaded with history as well as with my memories. For the first few days, Basil Williams and young Richmond, son of the painter, were with me, and we stopped at Volksrust to visit a certain flat-topped hill near there, a hill—"as many such there be"—rising about a thousand feet or little more above the average level. On the northern side it is burnt red with the sun and is shaped in terraces, one of which rests on a rocky cliff, difficult to climb except in one place where the rock is worn away. A red, flat-topped hill, which, for some reason of their own, the Zulus called Majuba, it had remained unnoticed since the sun and rain and frost began to carve the African mountains into their present form, till suddenly, one 27th of February, it became famous, and the influence of its name could be traced in all the subsequent history of the west region lying south of the Zambesi.

We climbed up the thin path bisecting the northern face, and it took me only fifty minutes. But be sure it had taken Joubert and his handful of volunteers longer that February night when they reached the summit just before the grey of dawn. In the shallow saucer on the top I found the graves and simple memorials of our dead. On the southern edge I looked over the cliffs down which many of our men, startled and leaderless, leapt to destruction.

Late one night I entered Ladysmith again. It has been truly, if unkindly, said that, if the dead returned, their welcome would be faint. My welcome both from the townspeople and from such officers as were still stationed there was not faint ; far from it. Except sometimes in Ireland, I have never been received with such warmth of pleasure. And yet I was like one of the dead who return. I remembered so much more than the people then walking up and down the familiar streets. The stones and trees and turns of the road were to me full of hidden significance which no history could record. Who knew or cared what those splashes of fading whitewash meant where the men of the *Powerful* marked their camp ? Or that hollow in the rocky hill-side, where the Manchester officers imagined a messroom ? That crack in the pavement, I alone knew, was made by a shell that first passed through a mule. That round hole in the grass was the work of a comic old Boer mortar, almost the last thing we had strength to laugh about. That garden was still barren because Colonel Stoneman knocked it to pieces for his " biltong " factory of horse flesh. That scratch on my bedroom door in the Crown Inn showed where Vallentin's servant was struck by a shell, and there he died hoping his master got his breakfast all right. That scooped-out hollow in the river bank, now overgrown with saplings, was where Maud and I hid Steevens from the sun and shells a few days before he died. History passes such things in silent ignorance. They are no longer remembered, and that was why I felt like the dead who return, for I alone remembered them all. And so it was the more amusing to meet at meals a chattering young man who had recently arrived from Cape Town and delightedly expatiated to me upon the course of the siege, the value of the naval guns, and so on, never imagining or discovering that perhaps my knowledge was even greater than his.

Having heard and seen many strange things, and remembered even more, I said a last farewell to Ladysmith and

slowly and regretfully made my way round to Cape Town, whence, slowly and regretfully, I took ship for home.

The end of the Boer War marked the beginning of a new epoch for myself—a new and happier epoch, as providing more freedom for the exercise of such powers as I possess, which is the very definition of happiness. It is true that for a time I still remained in subjection under the service to which I was then bound. But at the end of June 1903, with the customary plea of “Staff reduction,” I received notice that I should soon have to go, “through no fault of my own,” and my joy at the prospect of losing a moderate competency was equal to the joy of many at gaining one. The happy release came at last by an unexpected beneficence, as when out of the eater cometh forth meat. For in the summer and autumn of that year, the Bulgarian inhabitants of Macedonia, crying, “better an end with horror than horrors without end,” rose in revolt against the tyranny of Abdul Hamid, and accounts of Turkish repression by massacre and devastation began to reach this country. The Balkan Committee was established, with James Bryce, whose high qualities and achievements so distinguished a long life, as President, and, as Chairman, Noel Buxton, already rising to distinction. A Macedonian Relief Committee was also formed with Bertram Christian as Chairman, and Henry Brailsford, together with Jane Malloch Brailsford, was commissioned to go out as its agent, because both knew the country already, and were singularly well equipped by sympathy and capacity for the work. Suddenly, on October 15, Noel Buxton asked me if I would accompany them, not so much to assist in the relief as to investigate and report on behalf of the Balkan Committee. The offer came to me like the day-spring, and next day I said farewell to the *Chronicle*. My colleagues among the leader-writers and other members of the staff said they were grieved at my going, and the office boys were grieved beyond question. So were the compositors, for I wrote a very legible hand, and seldom had to alter a

galley proof. I hate parting from friends, and even from enemies, for every parting is to die. But it was with a sense of splendid exhilaration that, on the night of October 18, 1903, I started for Salonika, and entered upon a new epoch in my life. Samuel Butler once wrote, "Behold and see if there be any happiness like unto the happiness of the devils when they found themselves cast out of Mary Magdalene." Well, I cannot say for certain, but I think my happiness was of much the same quality.

CHAPTER XII

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

ALL THROUGH the summer of 1903, we heard of abominations committed by the Turks that recalled the "Bulgarian atrocities" which had roused the leonine rage of Mr. Gladstone more than a quarter of a century before—wholesale massacres of Bulgar populations, tortures of men, ravishing of women, and the utter destruction of villages. The appeal to the heart of Europe was more violent than successful. France sat upon her throne unmoved. Germany kept a prudent eye fixed upon the Sultan's friendship and the future chance. But Russia and Austria had interests—similar interests, though in sharp opposition. Macedonia was like a girl left with a small fortune in the power of a cruel stepfather; Russia and Austria were her benevolent uncles, each claiming the right of guardianship, and each conscious of that small fortune. Accordingly, when the insurrection began to die down, late in September, and the process of restoring peace by annihilation seemed fairly unsatisfactory, the Tsar Nicholas met the old Emperor of Austria at Mürzsteg, and excogitated another scheme of reforms, which the Sultan agreed to accept "in principle." Under these reforms, Russia and Austria were to appoint two agents to work side by side with the Turkish Inspector-General appointed by an earlier scheme; mixed Commissions of Moslems and Christians were to examine the political and other crimes reported during the recent slaughters; and the Sultan was to set aside special sums for the rebuilding of houses, schools, and churches in the devastated villages. A gendarmerie under

foreign officers was also to be established in various provinces, and it actually was established in the following year. But otherwise the reforms became ridiculous rather than remedial, and no breach was made in the established tradition of Turkish administration.

The situation did not appear exhilarating, and yet I doubt whether a happier party ever gathered in a foreign and perilous land than was ours when the Brailsfords overtook me at Salonika. Every day that we spent together was filled with jest and laughter ; though certainly our joy was not due to want of sympathy with the ghastly suffering around us. My happiness might be accounted for by freedom from an unendurable bondage, and by associating once more with people akin to my spirit. Theirs—well, they were delightfully young, both well under thirty. Henry Brailsford was conscious already of that extraordinary mental energy which has since served him and others so well in many a noble conflict ; he was endowed with the accurate mind and unfailing memory that suited him for the work before us ; and he was inspired by a sensitive and sympathetic temperament, singularly susceptible to every impression, whether of beauty, happiness, or pity. He possessed unflagging industry and a power of organisation rather to his Scottish upbringing than to his English birth. And Jane Brailsford was endowed with much the same qualities, beautified by the further touch of feminine delicacy and imagination ; beautified also by Celtic blue-grey eyes, dark hair, and a smile to soften the heart of any Turk or even of any infidel. To both was further given that peculiar form of courage which sensitive people sometimes display, as it were in contradiction to themselves—a courage which both had proved already and were to prove often again. Yet all this would hardly account for our paradoxical merriment in the midst of such a scene. It was a merriment that I have sometimes noticed since then among friends who stand in considerable danger but are united for a common

and difficult object from which none of them even thinks of turning aside.

So there we were together in Salonika, looking over the deep blue bay to the snowy curves and peaks of Mount Olympus, which I had gazed upon from Thessaly six years before, and was for many weeks to gaze upon again from Salonika during the Great War twelve years later. There we found our Consul-General, Robert Windham Graves,¹ who gave us all the advantage of his knowledge and influence. He took me to visit the Vali, an oldish grey-bearded man, talking French with success, and protesting that no doubt we had been filled up with lies, but the Turks had nothing to answer for—nothing more than the English, who had fired men from guns in India and burnt the villages in the Transvaal. It was difficult for an Englishman to reply, especially as the last café on the harbour front was then called the Café au Transvaal, as though in defiance of our hypocrisy. In Salonika I also found H. A. Gwynne, whose judgment and tolerance I had learnt to respect in South Africa, and who had lately been up in Monastir and Krushivo for *The Times*. Turks had shown him round, and his sympathy was mainly for the Turks; for how could his temperament resist that well-worn phrase describing the Turk as “The Gentleman of the Near East”? It was true that the gentleman had acquired queer attributes and habits, but it was not hard to justify the title in one who for five centuries had possessed the sole right to bear arms, and many less reputable rights as well.

On October 25 we merrily crept for ten hours up the tortuous route to Monastir—a tortuous route because the railway was made under contract by kilometre, multiplied as much as possible, and serpentine over any bit of plain with no ungentlemanly haste. Next day we made our formal call upon the Inspector-General in his *konak* beside the rushing stream that divides that beautiful town standing upon its

¹ Brother of C. L. Graves, my Christ Church friend.

high mountain plateau. Hussein Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General, always known as Hilmi, was supposed to be omnipotent in Macedonia, and he fondly believed the supposition. There was something attractive and even superb about the man. After various interviews with him, I wrote at the time :

“ Hilmi Pasha sat in Monastir, pacifying the Sultan’s misguided subjects. His room was heated to a genial warmth, his dark blue uniform was drawn tightly round his tall and graceful figure, his fez thrown rather back from his pale and weary face, relieved so effectively against the carpet of deep purples and crimsons that further darkened the wall behind. It is the face of a tired but unflinching eagle, thin and worn with toil. On each side of the delicate eagle nose, the deep brown eyes looked into yours with a mournful but steady sincerity that would carry conviction of truth into the wildest tale of *Arabian Nights*. A grave charm hangs over the face, sometimes broken by a shadowy smile, as when he said : ‘ I see by *The Times* that, on reaching Castoria, you will find that beautiful town in ruins.’ Often, while going down the stairs, still hearing in my ears the attractive voice that had just said : ‘ My only desire is that the truth should be known ; my only object is to restore tranquillity and happiness among the people whose treatment at the hands of the Government has been so generous, I might even say, so magnanimous ’—often I have thought that here at last was a Turkish official capable, just, and inspired with a benevolent zeal for reform. That is ‘ the Hilmi charm.’ ”

I was deceived, as most people are deceived by every typical bureaucrat till long experience has taught them what bureaucracy really means, and what an infinite gulf may lie between the official command and its execution. All day long Hilmi sat in that official residence, pacifying the Sultan’s

troublesome subjects, but he never saw a single ruined village, or spoke to a single villager, whether Moslem or Christian, Bulgar or Turk. No Turk ever worked so hard. From dawn till far into the night his door stood open to everyone who came. There was no waiting, no affectation or mysterious grandeur such as sickens the heart in the ante-chambers of ordinary rulers and bureaucrats. One after another his visitors came and went—soldiers, officials, consuls, and correspondents. They took their seats, dispersed around the divan, and Hilmi dealt with them in turn or together, with equal ease. In that complexity of tongues and cases, he never lost hold of the threads, or betrayed one particle of truth to all those listening ears. From time to time he would scribble a note upon a scrap of paper, held in the palm of the left hand, as is the Turkish manner, would hand it to an orderly, and the applicant's heart would rise. On the first occasion it would rise. If in a month's time he came to complain that no redress had yet been given, Hilmi would answer with an astonished smile : " But all must be well ; I gave the order ! " Of all the incarnations of State that I have known in any land, perhaps he was the most complete.

Whilst Hilmi was consulting by telegraph with the master who brooded at the centre of his web in Yildiz Kiosk, we waited for a few days, conversing with the refugees who had fled into the town from neighbouring ruined villages, and hearing the invariable tale of all alien races subject to Turkish rule. Here, for the first time, I heard from the villagers themselves of the tax levied upon the marriage of Christian girls, and the *jus primæ noctis* exacted if the tax were not paid. And here, for the first time, I heard that ominous expression, so common throughout Macedonia, that rather than continue as before, the villagers would walk down to the sea and drown themselves. Except for little troubles with patrols after dark, we had no open conflict with authority, though once a typical Englishman who was with us was

mobbed and robbed for ignorantly approaching a powder-magazine. The Turkish officer in command complained that our friend spoke "no human tongue," which was hardly fair, seeing that he spoke our public-school French, a language quite comprehensible to any Englishman. But on my representations to a German-speaking Commander-in-Chief, the property was honourably restored, and we were even thanked for not raising an international question on the event.

At last, with unusual speed for Turkey, all delays were surmounted, and one fine morning I went clattering down the road towards Flórina, with a cavalry escort of ten men and an officer, the escort nominally for my safety, the officer confessedly to watch my proceedings. A trim, silent, and much-enduring man that officer was, but by the end of my journey he was reduced to a state of pitiable misery. He spoke nothing but Turkish. For my purpose he felt the kind of contempt that a man-about-town feels for a rescue-worker in the cause of "fallen women." He openly declared that the Sultan ought to treat the loathly, pig-eating races as the Spaniards had treated the Moors, or as the Russians were treating the Jews, and, like all Turks, he could appeal to other examples that struck nearer home.

The Brailsfords and I had agreed that I should go round the villages reported as destroyed south of Monastir, while they proceeded straight to Ochrida, as being the best centre for relief. And so, accompanied by that uncalled-for escort, by the typical Englishman, and by Father Pröy, a humorous Austrian Lazarist of Irish descent, out I went across the high plain lying at the foot of the beautiful three-peaked mountains still bearing their old Greek name of Peristeri, or "The Doves." After going some distance we turned up to the right along a deep valley to the village of Buf, the first of the ruined villages that I saw. The story of that village may stand for the rest, except that fourteen of its two hundred and fifty houses were still standing, and nowhere else did I find more

than six, usually only one or two. In August, a body of Turkish troops were coming down the mountain, when a party of *Comitdadjis* (fifteen of them) opened fire from a neighbouring hillside and then fled to the woods. Instead of pursuing, the Turks advanced upon the village. The villagers hastened out to meet them with presents of food ; but the first house was set on fire, and then the general flight began. All who could not get away were cut to pieces in the narrow streets. One after another the houses were kindled. One church was burnt, the other wrecked and desecrated. The armed Turkish villagers from a place at the entrance of the valley swarmed up to murder and loot. It was they who burnt the granaries and drove off the cattle, and they who afterwards plundered the ruins of all the doors, windows, rafters, and woodwork that had escaped the flames. The inhabitants lived for many weeks among the woods and caves, coming down at night to collect any grain they could find. A few had taken refuge in Flórîna, but most had by now returned to their own proper ruins, and were thatching over little shelters in the corners of the insecure and crumbling walls. The streets and the old basements of the houses were covered deep with broken tiles from the fallen roofs. The walls stood blackened and ragged. The stones were splintered with heat, the mud bricks were crumbling away or returning to sludge. Every vestige of woodwork and furniture was wiped out. As I stood among that chaos of destruction, I wondered how I should begin if the ruins were mine and I was ordered by the Sultan to rebuild at once, with snow and frost already upon me, no tools, no wood, no cattle for transport, no food, and a grant of ten shillings for completion.

So I came on to Flórîna, a place to be well known to me again in the Great War, and, passing through several ruined villages, I climbed to the mountain town of Klisûre of the Wallachs, on the top of the high pass connecting Flórîna and Sórovitch with Castoria. There I advised Father Prøy to

make his headquarters for relief, because it was a centre of misery, and when we reached Castoria we found that beautiful town to be Greek in race, and venomously Patriarchist in religion. Standing on a circular peninsula in the middle of a placid lake, Castoria was then dominated by a Greek Archbishop whose rancour against Russians and Bulgars was hardly tempered by adroit flattery of the Anglican Church, and a free-thinking scepticism acquired in a German University. For on the wall above me, as I conversed with him, hung a photograph of a ghastly head, severed at the neck, and with a bullet through the jaw, dripping blood. It was a Bulgarian chief, murdered by a gang in the Archbishop's pay while the Bulgar lay wounded in a ditch. So little had the faithful pursuit of ingenuous arts softened His Beatitude's manners or checked his native ferocity.

A day's ride from Castoria brought me to the largish village of Bilshta, where I was entertained by an Albanian Bey, and for the first time experienced the Albanian hospitality to which long afterwards I became accustomed.

For directly I arrived, he dispatched orders that every living thing in the neighbourhood should be slain, and for four or five hours we waited in silent esteem while the process of slaughter and cookery proceeded. Then towards nine o'clock the dinner began : soup with whole chickens in it, a whole lamb ready jointed, a sheep also jointed, a hissing dish of partridges, which fell on the floor but were hardly missed, a stew of leeks, cabbages, and cauliflower, two sorts of rice, sweet cakes, apples, grapes, and plentiful wine and coffee. All through the feast a tall Albanian stood close beside me holding a heavy oil lamp. Another giant stood beside the Bey, holding a similar lamp, and when I asked if they could not put the lamps down on the table to avoid fatigue, I was told it was the Albanian custom, and the host only wished he had provided resinous pine torches instead.

We came next to Kóritza (Kortcha), already the subject of dispute between Greeks and Albanians, as it still is. And

there I conversed with another Greek Bishop, whom I described as "a soft but well-informed man, who spoke with eyes always modestly cast down." He was one of the Commission that had then been sitting for some years to arrange a union between the Greek and Anglican Churches. He had heard of Pusey and Liddon, and had known Sandford, the old Bishop of Gibraltar. He told me there was no trouble in Albania, but that Christians and Moslems agreed like little birds in their nests. This he said knowing it to be a lie, but not daring to speak otherwise; for, as his secretary afterwards told me, the Sultan was always sending spies disguised as Europeans, and no one could speak openly. When I tried a political question he quietly refused to answer, but he denounced the Exarchists a good deal, and their Slavonic aims. He was murdered soon afterwards.

And so at last I came in sight of Lake Ochrida, to me the most beautiful lake in the world. Ochrida is one deep oval like a vast sapphire, surrounded by mountains, very wild and rugged on the north-west side, and it has only one issue—the rushing stream that pours out by Struga at the northern end and becomes the Drin of copious history. That day I put up at Pogradetch in the south-west corner, and walked over to the monastery of Sveti Naoum, six miles away along the southern shore. Only three monks were living there then, but they held large farms, with seventy-five labourers and a lot of cattle, so that they could afford to keep up the monastery as a guest-house, hospital, and mad-asylum, all of great service there. Just the place it seemed to cure insanity or other turbulent disease; for it stands out into the lake upon a massive rock; its building is equally massive, and the thirteenth-century Byzantine church, built in small chapels clustered around a central dome, was the very home of peace.

Leaving Pogradetch to wallow in the satisfying accumulation of stolen goods, next day we started up the lake for Ochrida, against a raging north wind which the boatmen

at first refused to face. Owing to prehistoric vested interests, the boats on the lake have remained as primeval dug-out canoes, with huge beams nailed on each side for balance, and are moved by three oars in the bow on the port side, and one oar near the stern to starboard. I suppose the natives knew the habits of their own waters best, but our voyage was not successful. It took two hours to come level with the monastery, and then turning head-on to the storm, we struggled past great cliffs where golden eagles, cormorants, grebes, herons, and cranes flew up, and I saw an ancient chapel cut in the rocks by a long departed hermit, and still haunted by a madman who came there to pray. By that time the two men of the escort and my little officer were stretched at the bottom of the boat, horribly sick, and soon afterwards the boatmen refused to struggle any further against the perpetual drift towards the lee shore, which their three oars on the port side naturally increased.

So we were put ashore and walked the last ten miles into Ochrida town, where I found Jane Brailsford had already arranged a clean hospital in a ramshackle, empty old house, and Brailsford had just returned from visiting the utterly destitute villages down the course of the Drin. After discussing the situation for a few days, and drawing up a report, I was obliged, most sorrowfully, to leave them there, exposed to winter, smallpox, and typhus (which caught Jane Brailsford in the early spring), while I returned to England to report to the Balkan Committee and to raise funds for the Relief. I went by Presba Lake and Resna back to Monastir, where I found Hilmi still seated in his *konak*, pacifying the country. He would listen to no complaints or criticism, but only praised his own administration and the incomparable felicity of all who dwelt under it. He extolled the generosity of the Sultan's Government in granting doles to the ruined villagers, and when I protested that nothing had yet been received and that the grant for rebuilding was ridiculously inadequate, he told me that a week had passed since I was

among the villages, and his orders had gone only yesterday ! He was eloquent, charming, suave, and plausible, but nothing could be done with him, except to induce him to take notes on special cases in the Turkish manner. Our typical Englishman, however, thought I had not been stern enough in my protests, and so at last he indignantly cried : “ *C’est une grand pitié, Monsieur, que vous avez brûlé tant villages !* ” Perhaps fortunately Hilmi, though he spoke excellent French, did not comprehend the remark, but murmuring “ *enchanté* ” and “ *au revoir* ” took leave of us and remained seated in his official’s Paradise.

Well as I had known my country before (for indeed, I had traversed nearly every county of England, Wales, and Lowland Scotland on foot) I think I came to know her still better in the following months of that winter. I now passed into the homes of the most varied people and classes, and saw the hearty North, the gentle South, the proud relics of feudalism, the solidly comfortable manufacturers, the sorrowful farmers, and the restive working men. London, Bedfordshire, Dublin, Woolwich, Leeds, Cambridge, Kendal, Carlisle, Newcastle, Hexham, Stockton, Farnham, Woking and Plymouth—in ten days I performed at them all just as though I had been a travelling circus or a theatrical company on tour. And somehow or other I managed to tack in a farewell dinner to the members of my fine old staff of reviewers on the *Daily Chronicle*, of which I had been literary editor for more than five years whenever I was in London.

Speaking for Macedonian Relief was continued into the next year (1904), and led me to address a congregation from the pulpit of an Anglican church, for the first time and the last. It was the church in Halifax, then served by my dear friend, William Ingham Brooke. Many other meetings we held—at Devonport, Farnham, Bolton, Liverpool, and Eton—but for me the most notable was one at Guildford.

For there the great and terrible hunter, Frederick Selous, lover and destroyer of wild animals, was in the chair, and I have seldom seen a more attractive man. He was then something over fifty, and still about thirteen years from his death in his beloved Africa. I wrote at the time :

“The only memorable thing about the meeting was Selous, who took the chair and spoke admirably : a straight and splendid man, white-haired, nose short and straight, grey eyes singularly wide open ; as fine a figure as I have known. I spoke exceptionally well, for me, and we collected £60.”

Our collections were strangely good. In all we raised close upon £35,000 in three or four months, and as we reckoned a pound a life, we may have preserved 35,000 men, women and children alive. Whether it was better to keep them alive or to let them die before the sufferings of the next ten, twelve, or fourteen years fell upon them, no one can judge.

But though I was successful in gathering money for far-off Macedonia, the “ruin” of which I had spoken so cheerfully when I left the *Chronicle* was now drawing ominously near. It was true that my friend, Robert Donald, had just succeeded as editor, and he graciously tried to arrange for me to write both leaders and special articles ; but the work was irregular and uncertain. Early in January, war between Russia and Japan was obviously approaching, and I petitioned to be sent out again as the *Chronicle* correspondent, together with Donohue, who had been with me in South Africa. Donald himself, always kindly disposed, was favourable, but after seeing Frank Lloyd, then the chief proprietor, he told me that someone (he mentioned his name, and there was no trouble in guessing it) had “poisoned Frank Lloyd’s ear against me,” and Donohue was to go alone. On February 10, I saw him off at Euston, and came home, myself poisoned with bitterness of spirit, to write a review of a book

about the Roman Forum ! I applied to Gardiner of the *Daily News* and to C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, both in vain ; and so I lost my one chance of seeing the Far East, and learning why the Japanese are so generally disliked in spite of their great qualities, while the Chinese are almost universally beloved. I should also have learnt, two years sooner than I did, that the Russian bogey, which had distracted our foreign policy for fifty years, was but an illuminated turnip, and that the Russian " steam-roller " of ten years later would neither steam nor roll. In the end I became most grateful to the surreptitious enemy who " poisoned the ear " against me, for otherwise I should have missed a far finer opportunity than the Russo-Japanese war. But for the time the situation was difficult, for I had nothing beyond occasional work on the *Chronicle*, and occasional articles for the *Speaker*, then edited by J. L. Hammond, afterwards to be famous as the leader among social historians.

Unexpectedly, two gaps in the hedge of financial embarrassment opened, and both were due to a book that John Murray published for me that winter. It was called *Between the Acts*, a series of scenes and stories founded on my own experiences. It was received with startling favour by English reviewers, and it ranks among the few successful of my books, ultimately bringing me in nearly £70. But one or two Americans estimated it still more highly than the English, and especially I may mention Thomas Wells, editor of *Harper's Monthly*. He introduced it to Colonel Harvey, then closely connected with the same firm, and afterwards American Ambassador in London. Sydney Brooks, also connected with *Harper's*, must have introduced it to W. D. Howells, the simple-hearted novelist, then about 67, exquisitely polite, clean, trim, and cheery, accompanied in London by a singularly sweet and calm-souled daughter, looking like the last lovable survivor of Puritan New England, as perhaps she was. So what with one thing and another, I began to gather round me a kind of reputation

for writing, and both Thomas Wells and Colonel Harvey urged me to migrate to New York and work with them, if only for a time. With characteristic generosity they offered to transport me simply as their guest, but my natural love for my country and for some people in it made me refuse, though this American friendship bore fruit only a little later on.

Another result of the book had more immediate effect. Hallam, the brother of John Murray, was born with the sensitive spirit and skilful hand that might have made him an artist if he had not been bound to the famous firm. As an amateur, he was a water-colour painter of exceptional talent, and he naturally wished to publish his drawings of scenes and architecture in France and Italy, if he could find a suitable man to write a text to them. In kindly admiration of *Between the Acts* and *The Plea of Pan*, he asked me if I would follow the course of selected pictures through France and Italy, and write on the scenes as I pleased. I refused the Italian part, knowing little of the language or the history, except in Dante, but I joyfully accepted the French. And so in May (1904) I set out from Havre to journey through that attractive country, with little beside a map and a cycle. It was a pleasing time I had—no danger, plenty to eat in every village, an amiable people, friendly to every stranger who carried bits of gold, and the whole country suffused with a divine light that I think is peculiar to France and Greece—to France and Greece in spring.

CHAPTER XIII

A LAND OF SLAVERY

THERE CAME to me a suggestion from the Harpers' firm in New York. Colonel Harvey and Thomas B. Wells wrote asking if I would undertake an "adventurous journey" for them, and offering £1,000 to cover expenses, payment, copyright and all. It was hard to surrender the London life just becoming so attractive and exhilarating, but, of course, I accepted. The difficulty was to select the adventurous journey. I thought of Arabia ; but Doughty had been there. I thought of New Guinea ; but Haddon had been there. The South Seas tempted me with their lovely islands and a people clothed only in hibiscus flowers ; but Stevenson had been there, and though they were not yet hackneyed by sentimental gush, the journey was hardly adventurous. At the price I could not hope to reach either pole, nor could I walk all down the summits of the Andes (as was long my dream). Besides, I knew that after a month or two I should sicken of any travel devoid of some definite object strong enough to withstand loneliness and hardship.

Suddenly the thought of the slave-trade occurred to me. I consulted H. R. Fox Bourne, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, and Travers Buxton, Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, remarkable men of opposite temperaments, agreeing only in their sincerity and tenacity of purpose. Both told me of dim rumours they had heard concerning a terrible form of slavery carried on in the Portuguese territories of Angola (West-Central Africa), and on the closely connected islands of San Thomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea. Mr. F. Torday, one of the most scientific

Congo explorers, told me that similar dark rumours had reached him out there, and he painted Angola as a region of unknown dangers and appalling horror. Since Livingstone, Commander Cameron, and Colonel Colin Harding, few Europeans, except Portuguese traders, he said, had ever traversed it, and slavery was there carried on unobserved and unchecked. My decision was taken, for here was a journey almost certainly adventurous, and with an effect definite, inspiring, and possibly beneficial.

I embarked in the Elder Dempster S.S. *Fantee* (Captain Tyrer) and along the deadly "Coast," in steamy air thick with the smell of vegetation decaying over miles of swamp we slowly passed, touching at various points, discharging cargo and officials, officers and traders, whom duty and the British need for soap and candles drove into exile there, or into a speedy death. In exchange we took off barrels of palm oil and kernels for making those soaps and candles ; parties of negresses with hair cut in segments like melons, and each invariably carrying an iron utensil more serviceable than polite ; and gangs of happy Kroo boys, powerful savages ready to work the ships or engage for any labour on condition of being returned to " we country " at least every six months.

At Bonny we stayed some time, and at Calabar nearly a week, so that I was able to gain some knowledge of the coast, and even of the mangrove swamps into the loathsome darkness of which I penetrated in a vain search for hard ground reported as the haunt of various wild beasts.

Yet even in that slimy and turbulent region civilisation had planted her foot. For at Calabar, standing on firm ground about thirty miles up the " Oil Rivers," I found a mad asylum, a gaol, a hospital, barracks, a customs office, and a golf course. At the base of " The Hill " along the water stood the " factories " where dwelt the " traders," the very people for whom the whole settlement exists, but separated from the officials and military up above them by an invisible

and impassable social line. On the opposite side of the river, built on piles driven into the actual swamp, was a "beach" or platform, where stood a German "factory," which the German traders declared to be healthy and free from mosquitoes and other flies. They were trading with a German settlement on the part of Lake Chad then attached to the Cameroons, but most easily approached up the Cross River. Anchored out in the river also was the hulk of an old merchant-ship still used as a "factory," the last of that kind which once was common. And down the river I saw the comparatively open space or clearing where once had stood a *dépôt* for slaves waiting to be embarked for the Land of the Free. But in conversation with the Acting Governor, Mr. Fosbery, I was told that slavery had been definitely declared illegal three years before, though tribal and domestic slavery continued among the natives themselves, and I concluded that this was one of those rare cases in which law was ahead of custom. I noticed also that in the background of every "factory" lurked a swarthy girl, often very beautifully formed, but hardly visible in the darkness, and I heard that such companions could always be obtained from the chief of their tribe on condition that when they returned home they handed over to him such "dash" or present as had been given them for their services. If offspring had been part of the service, the child was generally entrusted to some Mission Station there (usually Scottish) to be brought up. I saw specimens of this admixture—negroid faces and bodies, yellow curly hair, blue eyes, and projecting lips dull red—not a successful combination, I thought, though in some cases the child could claim high descent on the father's side.

Putting out from Calabar, we passed between the mountain of Fernando Po and the mountain of the Cameroons, only the base of both being visible, the summits wrapt in cloud. In the wide but shallow harbour of the Cameroons we put ashore at Duala, the chief settlement of what was

then a German colony. The place was well laid out, upon a regular and scientific plan, very unlike the haphazard confusion of Calabar, especially in the native quarter. Roads or streets ran at right angles. The residences of officials, originally built, I believe, by English Baptist missionaries, looked like villas in a suburb. The German doctor showed me a faultless array of the latest and most scientific German drugs and antidotes. Yet the white population was dying with terrifying rapidity, chiefly of black-water fever, and news of deaths kept coming in while we conversed. Everything that sanitation could do had been done. The ground was hard. Across the river rose the alluring mountain known to Mary Kingsley, and every prospect pleased. Yet the people died like poisoned dogs.

After leaving the Cameroons, we passed the Portuguese island of Príncipe, its volcanic precipices wreathed in customary mists, and we anchored off San Thomé, wreathed also in hot mists and swept by tornadoes that made us shift our anchorage and drenched my cabin and the alleyways with water a foot deep. Nevertheless, the skipper, doctor, purser, and I got ashore, and so for the first time I touched that abhorrent island which was ultimately to prove the main object of my journey. I noted the town as "ragged, ruined, and old-world," but most the day was spent at the Eastern Telegraph Station. There we found almost all the British staff down with a terrible bilious fever, but one of them volunteered a certain amount of information as to the slavery on the plantations, over which the chief of the telegraph station kept anxious watch. For myself, I did not raise the question at that time as our stay was short, but was content to admire the beautiful small white herons or egrets haunting the oxen ; for they have a peculiar taste for the ticks on cattle, and so are called by the natives " the buffalo's friends." It is the same species that our barbarian ladies love to have massacred in the breeding-season for plumes in hats. Tiny finches and wrens in shot purple also flitted about,

like humming-birds, and the island looked beautiful, in spite of its deadly reputation and the tornadoes then raging.

In crossing to the Cabinda coast of the mainland, we passed through little floating islands of reeds and grass, covered with sea-birds, and the water showed greenish brown where the waves broke ; for we had reached the washings of Central Africa carried down by the Congo. We landed through the surf at Landana, and again, further south, at the settlement of Cabinda, where I walked up the hill to the Angola Mission (mainly Scottish) of which I had already heard as being maintained by a society of Faith Healers and very primitive, or believing, Christians, who had grievously offended the Portuguese Government, perhaps by their Christianity, certainly by their denunciation of the slave trade. There I had a long and solitary converse with M. Z. Stober, the leader of the Mission, a very unusual man—thin, elegant, polite almost to affection, and much inclined to pray over me. For he rapidly divined my purpose in coming out. He gave me much useful advice and many warnings, besides encouraging the rest of the missionaries (including a few men and ten or twelve pallid but persistently faithful women) to implore that “ help ” might at once be given me to overcome a raging fever from which I was then suffering.

That night “ help ” did come from some quarter. The fever and rheumatic pains began to abate, and in the morning we glided into the mouth of the Congo itself, having San Antonio on our starboard side, and on the port the shining white houses of Banana upon its projecting spit of land. Under the pilotage of Captain Wright we passed up the river through the whirling deep of Hell Gate, to Matádi.

After walking up the beginnings of the railway from Matádi, as far as the first cataracts on the river, I reluctantly turned back to the ship, and soon we were out at sea,

running past the low cliffs of the Angola coast. In the morning of December 16 (1904) we cast anchor off the Angolan capital of St. Paul de Loanda, the very spot at which Livingstone issued to the sea after his first journey from South Africa ; and the very spot from which he turned back again into the heart of the unknown interior, simply to protect a few natives who thought it unsafe to return without him. Though all England was waiting to receive him with every honour that could be bestowed upon so heroic an explorer, he quietly turned back, and I suppose it was the noblest action in all that heroic life.

With the possible exception of French Dakar, Loanda is the only place on the West Coast between Moorish Tangier and Dutch Cape Town that looks like a town. But a disastrous plague of sleeping-sickness had greatly increased its natural disquiet and depression, for it reduced the supply of labour, and labour was already short on the mainland, owing to the drain of natives carried off to the wealthy cocoa islands of San Thomé and Príncipe in the Gulf. In any case, the Angolan plantations were failing, for Brazil surpassed them in coffee, San Thomé in cocoa, the Congo in rubber, and the sugar-cane had almost lost its value except for the manufacture of rum to trade with natives. But without labour nothing at all could be grown, and labour was short, no matter how rapidly children were produced by the "contracted labourers," or *serviçaes* upon the plantations. It was true that by the terms of the legal contract all children of "contracted labourers" were declared free. By the terms of that contract the labourer bound himself to work nine hours on all days "not sanctified by religion," with an interval of two hours for rest, and not to leave the service of the employer for five years, "except in order to complain to the authorities," while the employer bound himself to pay an unspecified sum in monthly wages, with food and clothing. After seeing for myself how that legal contract worked on the plantations, I still cannot

decide which was the vilest joke in those terms—the limit of five years, the payment of wages, the freedom of the children, the right of complaining to the authorities, or the days sanctified by religion. Obviously the difference between this system and slavery was only official ; that is to say there was no difference.

Of this I already had evidence. In the Portuguese ship on which I sailed from Loanda down the coast to Benguella were five little boys dressed in striped jerseys and running up and down the companion stairs on all fours, as natives from the interior invariably do. At Benguella their owner sold them very advantageously for nearly £10 apiece, whereas the average price for children was only £3 to £5. An Englishman prospecting for gold, with whom I met once or twice upon my journey, had been offered a gang of forty men and women at £18 apiece, and he did in fact buy two men and two boys, giving them freedom at once. But that was a few hundred miles up country, and on the coast I found the price of a grown man ranged from £16 to £20, and of a woman it was about £15, unless of course the woman had special advantages in the way of good looks, in which case her price was higher, as in civilised countries. Indeed, a traveller whose waggon accompanied me for part of the journey told me he did not consider £25 was too much for the girl he had bought at Benguella as his concubine, though experts in the woman-market considered this price unnecessarily high.

Upon our way down the coast the ship put in at Lobito Bay, and that was indeed a memorable day for the harbour's British contractor. For the railway was then just beginning to be built from that splendid natural harbour up into the interior, and the great Katanga copper mines, there to connect with the Tanganyika railway and the railway from Johannesburg and Buluwayo. Let future passengers, if they please, remember that I was the very first man to land from a steamer in Lobito Bay. A little tramway then ran for

eight miles over sand to Katumbella down the coast, and that was all the railway existing.

At Katumbella the white paths that one sees descending the hills behind the town have been the main slave-tracks for centuries, and were so still ; for they lead from the interior by the shortest and easiest route. But when the slaves had been rested and sorted out in the courtyards and stockades there, they were marched along the coast road for fifteen miles to Benguella, which was the chief slave market for the cocoa islands of San Thomé and Príncipe. There I stayed for some days in a gambling-hell (since there was no room in the brothel—the only alternative) while I fitted out for my journey inland. At last, after infinite effort, I hired a large waggon with twenty-four oxen for the first part of the journey, until we should reach the “fly country,” where the tsetse would kill the oxen, as it kills all domestic animals. The driver was an interesting Englishman, who told me he had come out originally to collect insects for the British Museum, but had settled down to transport-driving as being more profitable than the national service in butterflies. Some hundred miles up country we came to a little kraal he had built for himself on the edge of the forest. There a black woman, slightly tinged with yellow, was rearing his dusky race, and in some ways he himself was relapsing into savagery. But, like Wordsworth’s Youth travelling daily further from the east, he was still attended by the vision of what had been, and in the midst of his masterly knowledge of oxen, waggons, and forestry, he retained some memory of literature and even music. Like most people who have lived solitary in the heart of darkness, he was subject to fits of bloodthirsty rage, but he never murdered anyone, not even me, for whom he felt a natural contempt until I proved that I could inspan and drive the oxen, cook, and “doss down” under the waggon almost as well as he did.

With the waggon I trekked through January and February

chiefly across the forest plateau which culminates in a wet and bare plain called Bourru-Bourru by the natives, who also call the top of a bald man's head his Bourru-Bourru. New every morning were the troubles—the drenching rain, the straying oxen, the crooked axle that had to be hammered out in an extemporised furnace, the turbulent river over which we swam the oxen, sailed the bed of the waggon as a raft, and dragged the wheels with the oxen's chain. Five rivers had to be crossed before we reached the upland vaguely marked as Bihé on the maps. On the way we passed a few deserted villages, but hardly any inhabitant, the natives having removed, chiefly in fear of the slave-trade ; for they lived in perpetual dread of being sold or seized and carried off to San Thomé—*Okalunga*, or the “ Abyss of Hell ” as they called it. But we passed a French Catholic monastery, or Mission, at Caconda, where a few Fathers were trying to instruct native boys in useful arts such as carpentry, sometimes redeeming the boys from the slavers at their own expense. And we passed the important Portuguese fort of Belmonte, and the central depot of the Companhia Nacional at Cayala, where slaves and other goods might be purchased. From there I walked northward through wet but fairly open country to an English Mission Station of Plymouth Brethren at Ochilonda, where I found F. S. Arnot, a missionary of long experience, and an explorer whose name will be recorded in African history for his work in the Garagantze region and his discovery of the Zambesi's upper course. I also walked south to Kamundongo, where the “ American Board ” had a small Mission under F. C. Wellman, who had acquired great knowledge of native customs and folklore. I think that Mission was Congregationalist, and so was the other Mission I advanced to in the waggon a few days later—the station at Chisamba, conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Currie and Mr. and Mrs. Moffat, all Americans. Besides two Roman Catholic Missions that I saw, there were about eight in all, and it was

remarkable that nearly all the workers were Americans. Even the two solitary men whom I found far away beyond Mashiko, in their little hut at Chinjamba, though working for the British Plymouth Brethren, were themselves Americans and had studied medicine (that excellent basis for the conversion of natives) in American hospitals. Eight, or even ten, Mission Stations are not much for a country four times the size of Great Britain and Ireland together. But few though they were, the missionaries exercised some influence for good. Amid traders and planters whose very existence depended upon violence, deceit, and slavery, here were white men who kept their word, dealt honestly, and put the native's gain before their own. From end to end of Africa a white man's honesty is rarer than diamonds or gold ; but missionaries maintain the tradition of its existence.

We started in file from Chisamba, all on foot, and on the third day we crossed the Cuanza, there about the breadth of the Thames at Windsor, but much swifter, and full of hippos. A permanent ferry of narrow dug-outs took us over for the payment of four yards of cloth. On the further bank we entered the " Hungry Country "—a long stretch of deserted or uninhabited land, sandy for the most part, but well watered and covered with trees. It was said that even animals could not live there, but I found plenty of antelopes, porcupines, wart-hogs, and other beasts, and at night the leopards snuffed and grunted and roared around us as usual. The country was believed to lie under a curse, and I could give no other reason for its desertion.

My carriers apportioned their food for the distance very carefully, and if one of them fell sick or failed the others drove him along with whips or their small axes. But if a slave failed or dropped he was murdered at once, and skeletons that I found along the route clearly showed the gash made in the skull by the axe. The whole length of the path was strewn with white bones—the bones of slaves, for slaves are not buried, but free carriers are. The bushes on

each side of the path were hung with wooden shackles, which had clamped the hands or feet of the dead slaves at night and now were useless, or were cast aside when the traders had passed the greater part of the Hungry Country and knew that escape of the slaves was impossible. From end to end the narrow path—so narrow that one must bring one foot round in front of the other, like a native or a baboon—was a road of death. My little party walked quickly, but the passage took us nine days. In the midst of it, one clear night I saw the tail of the Great Bear twisting round above the northern horizon, and I knew that just out of sight were two big stars still pointing to the Pole.

Before I crossed the Cuanza into the Hungry Country, my feet were already painfully poisoned by jiggers, ants, and other insects that torment all travellers on foot, so that at times the pain of a long day's tramp was hardly endurable. Sweat and poor food had also worn me so thin that my Accra "boy" said to me, "Massa's face grow smally smally, and his belly stick in too plenty much." But more serious was the frequent recurrence of violent fever, with which the mosquitoes had thoroughly impregnated me within the first few weeks.

After passing the Portuguese fort of Mashiko, I came in April to the collection of Chibokwe and Luvalé villages, roughly called Chinjamba from the name of an old chief whom I saw sitting in his hut embracing a sceptre of carved wood. In the midst of the villages I found two young Americans, who had built themselves a little native hut there, and were living on native food. Their names were Dr. Morey and Dr. Maitland—Plymouth Brethren, I think, but I did not ask, for to me it made no difference what sort of Christians they were. But they had passed through the full course of medical training, and their hut was surrounded by a whole encampment of natives, who had come from far, having heard the fame of these white exorcists. It was pleasant to dine with the doctors upon black beans and

unleavened slabs of millet, and looking up at the doors and roof and walls, to see innumerable bright eyes staring through the holes to watch the antics of civilisation at its meals. For then I felt that, like a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, I was combining instruction with amusement. Pleasant too it was to accompany the doctors on their rounds every morning while they treated broken limbs, bad insides, wounds, and especially the atrocious sores and ulcers which rot the skin and flesh on shin and thigh and calf, and arise, I suppose, from poisonous microbes in the marshes—microbes from whose voracity I have myself now suffered for twenty years. But even more I enjoyed the society of three kings, who had come for treatment too, the most powerful among them bringing eight of his wives and several children, including a fascinating princess with an enormous smile. I had pitched my tent in the thick bush near by, and every morning that king came, without any pretentious ceremony, showed me his goitre, asked for tobacco, and sat with me an hour in silent esteem. Like the other two royalties, he smiled on the religious services held by the doctors in the villages and the hospital camp, for he appeared to agree with our own aristocratic and comfortable classes in regarding such performances as beneficial for the lower classes.

From the sight of the new shackles scattered at intervals in large numbers up and down the route, from the gangs of slaves I had already seen on their way to the coast, from the reports of the British, American, French, and German missionaries, from the talk of natives, and even of some Portuguese traders themselves, I had now gathered enough evidence to prove that the slave-trade, which had been driven underground for a time after the native rising, called the "Bailundu War" two years earlier, was fast reviving and now was practised almost as openly as ever.

From Chinjamba, in the interior, to the coast I had to make the whole of the journey on foot, and the walk for the

last few weeks was of unusual variety and interest. From the summit of a high pass I had my last view backward towards the interior of the mysterious continent I was leaving. Then we climbed the steep track over the final range, and there, far in front, like a gulf of dim and misty blue, merging in the sky without a trace of horizon, stretched the ocean.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COCOA ISLANDS

AS I APPROACHED the little town of Katumbella, near the mouth of the Katumbella River, a messenger met me half-way up the white track on the hill over which the slave caravans have passed for centuries. He brought an invitation from a Dutch trader to lodge in his private house, which I did for some days while I rested the carriers, watched the slave traffic, and shot at enormous crocodiles (probably in vain) or contemplated the sharks that could be seen in the high and transparent billows off the beach as in the glass cases of an aquarium.

Two Englishmen, having heard of my arrival, had come over from Benguella to warn me of the danger which they had been told awaited me there. One was attached to the Eastern Telegraph Company's station, the other had been in the Ladysmith siege, and so remembered me. They conveyed their warnings by various hints, strongly advising me to make haste and catch a steamer that was due to sail the next day. A Dutchman who had accompanied them was more explicit, and offered me the shelter of his house if I was obliged to remain. Of course I could not leave the coast without investigating the embarkation of the slaves, and so before dawn I set out for my last trek—the fifteen miles through the thorns and sand to Benguella, where I paid off my carriers, with regrets on both sides at parting, and stayed about a fortnight. It was not a pleasant time. I enjoy melodrama, but to be the central figure in a melodrama is different from watching it on the stage. I enjoy reading Bunyan, but I found his rule "to live each day as 'twere my

last," almost paralysing. Warnings came to me from every side. The honest Dutchman, Herr Duym, who gave me a room, was apprehensive day and night. The half-dozen British residents and engineers engaged on the new railway were apprehensive too, and gave me secret hints of danger. The Accra "boy" who had accompanied me throughout and spoke a little Coast English and Portuguese was terrified at the talk he heard in the stores along the street. Friendly people told me with peculiar emphasis of a Portuguese planter who had been going home to expose the slave traffic but was found dead in his cabin after his first meal on board. A Portuguese trader who had denounced the same traffic showed me a packet of pounded glass which he had scraped from the bottom of his soup.

Still, as the Portuguese steamers sailed twice a month, the delay between one sailing and the next enabled me to fulfil my purpose. I watched the slaves being marched down from the interior in gangs, as I had seen them on the route. In Benguella they were herded up in large courtyards behind the traders' or agents' houses. A day or two before the arrival of the next ship, the Curador, an official appointed by the "Central Committee of Labour and Emigration" in Lisbon, entered the so-called Tribunal (a long low building on the main street), and the natives were ranged up before him in parties. In accordance with the "reforms" introduced in 1903 after the panic caused by the Bailundu native rising against slavery, each native was formally asked whether he or she was willing to go to work in San Thomé. In most cases no answer was given, for the unhappy creatures knew well enough they were on their way to that "abyss of hell." If any answer was made, no attention was paid to it. A contract was then drawn out for five years' labour on one of the two islands, and each slave was given a tin cylinder containing a copy of his register, his birthplace, his chief's name, the name of the agent who had supplied him, and a space for "observations," of which I never saw any. He

also received a disc with his number, the initials of the agent, and sometimes the name of the island to which he was destined. Dressed like tomfools in brilliant cheap clothes and caps, with the "white man's Ju-ju" of disc and cylinder hung about them, the slaves were then marched back to their courtyards, or direct to the ship. They had been "redeemed" or "ransomed" by the paternal Government, and the pitiless farce was over.

Diverse causes had brought these men and women to their fate. Some had broken native customs or Portuguese laws ; some had been charged with witchcraft by the medicine-man because a relation had died ; some were wiping out an ancestral debt ; some were sold by their maternal uncles, to whom all children belong ; some served as indemnity for village wars. Some had been raided on the Congo frontier ; others were but changing masters, for when a slave was too worn-out for work on the mainland, he was shipped to San Thomé, just as we in London ship an old cab-horse to Antwerp for cat's meat. On June 8, 1905, a hundred and fifty of the poor creatures, not counting babies (no young children but babies were taken), bemused with a parting dope of rum, and bedecked like clowns with brilliantly striped jerseys and grotesque caps, passed down the Benguella street, bound for the land of doom from which there was no return.

I did not actually accompany them down the street, having been overcome during the previous night with the common effects of poisoning—violent intense cold in the limbs, which turned bluish, and fainting fits about every half-hour. Physicians have told me that the poison was probably aconite, but I have no evidence to show whether it was intentionally administered—no evidence beyond the probability and the repeated warnings, which kept reaching me, even from distant Mossamedes. In great distress my trusty Dutchman summoned my Ladysmith friend, and he carried or supported me down to the ship. Other Englishmen stayed

on board with me almost till the ship sailed, late at night, and their parting from me was, for Englishmen, singularly touching.

Next morning we anchored off Nove Redondo, and took on eighty more slaves. A heavy sea was running and, coming off in lighters, most of the natives were very sick. As the lighters rose and fell against the ship's side they were hauled on to the gangway like sacks. After we had stopped at Loanda and taken on forty-two more slaves (making our full complement 272 men and women, not counting the numerous babies) we called at Ambriz, and there a singular abominable occurrence occurred. For in the early morning one of the slaves, being the district of which he was a native not far away from the fo'c'sle, where the slaves were crowded together, and tried to swim for freedom. The sea was full of sharks and I could only hope they would devour him ; for a boat was dropped at once from the ship, and in ten minutes it had overtaken the swimmer. Leaning over the side, the two black men and the white officer battered his head with their oars and sticks till he was quiet, and then dragged him into the boat, laying a piece of sailcloth over his nakedness that the feelings of the ladies on board might not be shocked. Dripping and trembling, he was taken below by the doctor and the Government agent, who accompanied every consignment of slaves, and there he was chained fast to a post. "*Boa chicote !*" shouted the first-class passengers ; "Flog him ! Flog him !" And no doubt he was flogged without mercy ; but if so, the torture was performed in private—an unnecessary waste of pleasure, for the ladies and gentlemen would have thoroughly enjoyed the sight and sound. Not, I suppose, that they were worse than most people of their class. One must remember that this was a case of property and that the cultivation of cocoa, for which the slave was destined, is a very lucrative business. Civilised people may whine and blubber over imaginary sufferings in plays and novels, but touch their comfort, touch their property—they

are rattlesnakes then ! The Steamship Company which transported the slaves, and on that journey took off 16,000 bags of cocoa at four shillings a bag, was paying 22 per cent ; and the two islands of San Thomé and Príncipe were supplying one-fifth of the cocoa then consumed by the whole world. In face of such reassuring figures what did one man's torture matter ? Or what the enslavement of about 4,000 to 4,500 men and women every year ? For that was then the average number imported annually from the mainland. Afterwards it increased to about 6,000.

On landing at San Thomé I went by invitation to the Eastern Telegraph Station, and was received with great kindness by Mr. Ceffala, the head official, and by the rest of the small staff. They willingly gave me all the information they could, but did not know very much, being isolated by the conditions of their work, and also suffering severely from fever at the time. Even more important in the end was my meeting at the Station with Joseph Burtt, a man of very remarkable personality, who had just arrived from England, having been sent out by the Cadburys and other cocoa firms (including the German Stollwerck) to examine the very question upon which I was engaged. The man was obviously honest above suspicion. Truth radiated from him. I described him as "the most innocent of mankind," but the touch of sarcasm was undeserved. He was merely imbued with that admirable Quaker quality which has often maddened my impatient and unregenerate soul. It is a capacity to obey the precept, "Resist not evil, but overcome evil with good." It is the character which, upon encountering evil, instead of violently striking at it as we heathens are inclined to do, surveys it calmly, engages in silent prayer, and walks around to discover some way of taking it in the rear by persuasion or appeal to a sense of virtue always latent in the heart of evil men. To indignation the process is irritating in its quietude, its deliberation, and perhaps in its success. But I acknowledge that the success is almost

invariable, and Joseph Burt's subsequent service to the cause that I had most at heart was only one more example of it. He stayed nearly six months on the islands, journeyed up and down Angola for about six months longer, sailed round to Delagoa, visited the chief towns of South Africa, and was away from England nearly two years, engaged upon this investigation. After his return he published a valuable report, by which my own published conclusions were confirmed in almost every detail. And what was of at least equal importance for myself in the future controversy, he sent back to the British cocoa firms a code word signifying, "Nevinson's report, far from being exaggerated, is an underestimate of the truth."

Accompanied by this remarkable man or by some member of the Cable Station staff, I visited many of the *roças* or plantations, which on San Thomé numbered about 230. I went alone by steamer to the island of Príncipe and visited some of the fifty plantations there, being entertained by an exuberant negro from Sierra Leone, who regarded himself as the representative of the British Empire, and had a plantation of his own, cultivated by numerous slaves. On that wild and precipitous island I also found a British planter who gave me much information. In brief terms, the prevailing system on the islands was this : after the slaves had been landed on the pier at San Thomé, they were conducted, as I saw, to the Curador's office and apportioned to the various planters according to the discs given them at the port of embarkation. They were then made up into gangs and marched off to their plantation, the march taking not more than one or two days, for the San Thomé island is only about thirty-five miles by fifteen (and Príncipe only one-tenth of that size). After two or three days' rest, they were then set to work clearing the forests for further plantations, clearing the ground of weeds under the cocoa trees, gathering the great yellow pods which grow miraculously out of the main stem, sorting the brown kernels, heaping

them up to ferment, raking them out in vast pans to dry, labouring in the carpenters' sheds, or superintending the new machines. So the toil went on, day after day, till death ended it, and the slave's body, wrapped in a cloth and tied to a pole, as I saw, was carried out by two other slaves and deposited somewhere in the forests. The doctors told me that if they could keep a slave alive through the melancholy and home-sickness of the first year or two, he or she sometimes lived for some years longer. According to law the labour contract lasted only five years. The planter from time to time collected some fifty of his slaves who had been with him for five years, sent for the Curador, and paraded the fifty in front of him. In the presence of two witnesses and his secretary, the Curador then announced that their contract was renewed for five years more, and the slaves were dismissed to their labours. A planter told me that some of his slaves counted the years for the first five, but never after.

Our departure from San Thomé was delayed by the death of a port master, apparently due to simple terror of being poisoned. And in a cabin near mine lay a poor young Belgian who had come down from the Congo border with the usual accounts of the slave traffic, and kept telling me he was sure he had been poisoned on the ship. Gradually he became crazy or delirious, and was carried ashore in a dying condition. A raging headwind made progress tedious, but at last we reached Lisbon, then Vigo, then Liverpool, and such a welcome in London as was my greatest reward but one.

The greatest of all rewards was not to come till many years later. At the end of July 1905, when I returned, I was already well on in middle age, and I ought by that time to have known mankind better than I did. But I actually supposed that my revelation of this slave traffic would have an immediate effect. I had imagined that the British detestation of slavery would be aroused ; that our Government would make representations to Portugal on the subject ; that

our Quaker cocoa firms would at once boycott the raw material derived from such an abominable source ; and that there would be a general stir among honourable and influential newspapers. Nothing of the kind happened. A few of my personal friends gave up cocoa ; Fox Bourne, the enthusiastic secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, believed my report, and did his utmost to make it known ; Roger Casement, whom I then met for the first time, in the beautiful relic of the Savoy Convent beside the River Colne at Denham, confirmed my report in every particular from his own personal knowledge of Angola, but he was not then able to make his confirmation public. *Harper's* did not issue my account in book form until the following year, and in the meantime I was away in Russia ; the Anti-Slavery Society, so immensely helpful afterwards, was slow in taking the question up ; the Congo Reform Association, represented by E. D. Morel, afterwards to be so true a friend, seemed to fear that Angola might divert attention from the Congo. On almost every side, I was faced, not so much by opposition as by indifference.

Partly owing to my long absence in Russia and India during the intervening years, the height of the controversy was not reached till 1908 or 1909. Directly after my return from the islands I urged upon our cocoa firms the necessity of boycotting slave-grown cocoa, both for the sake of the slaves and for their own reputation as Quakers and hereditary opponents of the slave trade. I was met by that peculiar hesitation which often characterises Quakers when action is called for. Year after year, they put action off. Though Joseph Burt was their own man, they long held back his report. When they heard that I was about to publish an article upon the slavery in the *Fortnightly*, they sent Richard Cross the solicitor for one of the cocoa firms, to dissuade me. Richard Cross, although a man of highest character and honourable nature, did try dissuasion on me but failed, and the article appeared in September 1907.

Through A. G. Gardiner, then editor of the *Daily News*, controlled by the head of the Cadbury firm, they tried to prevent Brailsford, the chief leader-writer, from writing on the subject. But again they failed. Brailsford threatened resignation, and his leading article appeared in May 1908. In the same year Fox Bourne published his pamphlet, "Slave Traffic in Portuguese Africa," and I narrated the facts of the slavery at various meetings, the chief being one held in the Caxton Hall with St. Loe Strachey in the chair, and Dr. Robert Horton, Leonard Hobhouse, E. D. Morel, Anthony Hope Hawkins, and Miss Candlish of the Angola Evangelical Mission as principal speakers (December 4, 1908).

But indeed, by that time, the cause had enough of what Americans call "publicity." My colleague in the South African war and in Macedonia, H. A. Gwynne, then editor of the *Standard*, had got hold of my book, *A Modern Slavery*, and having heard that William Cadbury was just proceeding to Angola in person to make inquiries, he commissioned Sidney Low to write a leading article upon the subject in his paper (September 28, 1908). It was a fine specimen of satiric invective. It began by congratulating Mr. Cadbury upon his journey, "which does not come too soon." An ironic description of Bournville and its joys followed. Then the leading article repeated "our respectful surprise that Mr. Cadbury's voyage of discovery had been deferred so long," gave a brief summary of my book, and concluded with the words :

"Such is the terrible indictment, made, as we have said, by a writer of high character and reputation on the evidence of his own eyesight. There is only one thing more amazing than his statements, and that is the strange tranquillity with which they were received by those virtuous people in England whom they intimately concerned."

Obviously the gravamen of that charge against the cocoa firms was their prolonged delay in taking definite action.

Off and on for three years Fox Bourne, I myself, and others had been urging the necessity of boycotting the slave-grown cocoa, but had always been met by one plea or another for delay. It was not true that the firms had remained indifferent and done nothing. They had begun anxious enquiries seven years before ; they had sent out Joseph Burt ; they had asked Mr. Ceffala on San Thomé to watch the traffic for them ; they had appealed to Sir Edward Grey for advice ; William Cadbury had been two or three times to Lisbon to protest ; he was now on the point of setting out for Angola and the islands in person, and on his return the firms did at last declare the boycott I had always urged (March 17, St. Patrick's Day, 1909). In the *Daily News* of that date I wrote a special article to express my joy and congratulations. But the fine action of the firms had been deferred too long for their reputation, and the outside public could not possibly conjecture all that had really been done by them or the reasons of their hesitation. The Cadbury firm now saw themselves bound to institute a libel action against the *Standard*, sure to attract far greater attention than if they had simply announced the boycott even one year sooner.

So the famous civil action known as "Messrs. Cadbury Brothers *v.* the *Standard* Newspaper Company" came up for hearing before Mr. Justice Pickford and a jury on November 29, 1909, and it lasted seven days. The counsel for the plaintiffs were Mr. Rufus Isaacs (Lord Reading) and Mr. John Simon (Sir John Simon). For the defendants were Sir Edward Carson (Lord Carson) and Mr. Eldon Bankes. The jury retired for nearly an hour, and gave a verdict for the plaintiffs, with damages one farthing. Both Counsel appealed for costs, Sir Edward Carson claiming that the comparatively trifling amount granted as damages implied that, in the opinion of the jury, the action ought never to have been brought. But the Judge gave costs for the plaintiffs, and one naturally supposes they were glad to receive them as an addition to their damages.

I regarded that trial as establishing the facts of the slave traffic and the system of forced labour in Angola and the Islands as I had reported them. For if contradiction had been possible, two such advocates as Mr. Rufus Isaacs and Mr. John Simon would not have accepted my book on *A Modern Slavery* as true, or as understating the truth. But though my accuracy was not again questioned in this country, and even the Foreign Office had been induced to join in the protests of the Anti-Slavery Society, and to follow up protests with action, compelling the repatriation of many slaves (after 1908), the efforts to suppress the actual slavery had to be continued for many years.¹ Many came to my assistance : Canon Scott Holland of St. Paul's and Oxford, Mr. Scott-Lidgett, Lord Cromer, Lord Mayo (who had visited the islands more than forty years ago), Archbishop Davidson, Mr. Oldendorff, a cocoa dealer of Mark Lane, René Claparède of Geneva, and, finally Sir Edward Grey, not to mention St. Loe Strachey again, and Joseph Burt, whose efforts had been unremitting and so continued.

Just before the Great War victory seemed assured. On May 2, 1914, I wrote in the *Nation* what I hoped to be a song of triumph, beginning : " The publication of a White Book last week on *Contract Labour in Portuguese West Africa* marks a stage—almost the final stage—in a long and bitter controversy. At last all that some of us said about the slavery in Angola and the two Cocoa Islands of San Thomé and Principè is confirmed officially, No one can question the truth or go back upon it now."

¹ I say "even the Foreign Office," because when first I was introduced to a leading official there, he accosted me savagely with the words, " Are you the author of these very unpleasant articles on Portuguese Slavery ? Did you write that purple report ? " I replied that I was glad he found the articles unpleasant, but the report was hardly purple enough. Assuming the official sneer, he then asked, " Do you want us to reduce these wealthy islands to a wilderness on your bare word ? " I replied that a wilderness would be better than the abominations I had seen. With rising indignation, he demanded, " Would you have England police the world wherever you may find slavery ? " Imitating the official manner, I replied that the answer was in the affirmative, and the interview soon ended in courteous animosity.

CHAPTER XV

UNDER THE TSAR

IMMEDIATELY on my return from Central Africa (July 1905) I found myself involved in the enormous upheaval that had been rumbling in Russia for more than thirty years, and was then rapidly increasing into a power destined to overthrow the Autocracy twelve years later. The disastrous war with Japan had been declared in February 1904, and events followed quickly. In June of that year, General Bobrikoff, the Russian tyrant of Finland, was assassinated. In the next month the assassination of Plehve, Minister of the Interior, in St. Petersburg, followed; and even in England hardly a sigh or protest was raised over his fate. In November and December the Zemstvos petitioned the Tsar for an elected Legislature of two Houses, together with freedom of conscience, of the Press, of meeting and association, equal civil and political rights for all classes and races, and similar forms of justice for peasants as for other people. The birth of an heir to the ill-fated throne had already so inclined the Autocracy to clemency that, as father of his people, he abolished the punishment of flogging among his grown-up subjects, even in cases where they had been unable to pay the taxes due. And just after Christmas he issued a Manifesto that, where the need of change had been proved, he would take the matter into consideration.

But with the New Year (1905) a new force had appeared. Hitherto the revolutionary movement had been inspired, conducted, and carried out by men and women of the educated classes—students, journalists, doctors, barristers, and other professional people belonging to the division of

Russian society called the "Intelligentsia." But now the revolutionary workman appeared on the scene, and we have lived to see what a difference his appearance made. At first he was organised into "The Russian Workmen's Union," under the presidency of Father Gapon, who had won influence, owing to the working people's astonishment that a priest should take any interest in their affairs beyond receiving their fees for birth, marriage and burial. In January, strikes began in the iron, shipbuilding, cotton, and cloth works along the Neva and the Schlüsselberg road, and on the 22nd of that month, Father Gapon organised a procession of some 15,000 working men and women to lay a petition before the Tsar in his Winter Palace. The petition, protesting against a bureaucracy that had brought ruin and a shameful war upon the country, called for the election of a Constituent Assembly by secret ballot. It was framed in terms of child-like faith in God and in the Tsar as a benevolent father of his people. In Sunday clothes, bringing their children, bearing sacred ikons and banners, singing devout and loyal hymns, the procession approached the great square in front of the Palace, and from three sides it was met by volley after volley of fire, killing or wounding about 1,500 people. Meantime the Father of his people slipped out of the back-door and disappeared down the river to another palace.

Under Robert Donald, I was still writing leaders for the *Daily Chronicle*, and my heart was set on Russia. At last he generously agreed to my proposal to go, and the only obstacle was the bodily suffering which Africa had left with me, keeping me in perpetual torment with horrible suppurating sores on both legs, so that, without morphia, I got no sleep but rolled all night in anguish on the floor; I feared that the Russian winter would freeze the lead-lotioned bandages on the wounds and drag them more open, which also happened. But, as with most people, desire defied fear, and in the middle of November I started, being seen off at the Port of London by Robert Lynd, that fine Irish patriot of

Protestant Ulster descent, not then risen to fame as one among the best of essayists.

I went by sea because the Russian railways were closed by the general strike. The little Russian ship, *Irkutsk*, took me on board, much against the owner's will, for with passengers they were compelled to take a pilot, and I was the only passenger, so that I suppose they lost about £20 by my presence. As the captain could speak only ten words of English and I only ten of Russian, the conversation was neither exhilarating nor intellectual. But as we steamed slowly through the Kiel Canal, a great German ship passed us going west, crammed to overflowing with Russian refugees, who, waving caps and clothes and babies at us in triumph, shouted the Russian Marseillaise of Labour, the same tune as the French, except for a queer little addition to the last line signifying "Forward, forward, forward!" On November 21, we put to shore at the revolutionary town of Esthonian Reval. Fortunately for me, the second general strike had come to an end the day before, and that night I reached St. Petersburg by the first train that ran.

I attended a meeting of the Intelligentsia demanding the abolition of capital punishment, and there I listened to a professor who, with Russian melancholy, had compiled a *History of Assassination by the State*. When he announced that first he would read the long roll of those who had been executed for their love of freedom since the death of Nicholas I, the whole audience rose in silence and remained standing in silence while one might count a hundred, as when a regimental mess drinks in silence to fallen comrades. But what struck me most in that meeting, as in all Russian meetings of the time, was, first, the inexhaustible patience of a Russian audience, which would sit as though enchanted through prolonged discourses that seemed to end in nothing; and, secondly, the more natural trait that the greatest applause was always given, not to the finest speaker, but to the man or woman who had suffered most for the cause.

But my next meeting was of greater significance for the future. In the west of the city there stood a decrepit hall dedicated to "Free Economics"—a peculiar title for those times. This had been seized by the "Central Strike Committee," or "Council of Labour Delegates," as their place of assembly, and there I was admitted by a revolutionary compositor, hairy as John the Baptist, and as expectant of a glory to be revealed. Into the chamber were crowded about five hundred representatives of the main industries—railways, textiles, ironworks, timber yards, and others, each delegate representing about five hundred workmen. Most of the women wore the Russian blouse in scarlet to show their opinions; most of the men the blouse in dark brown, not needing to display their opinions. All blouses were buttoned close up to the throat and gathered round the waist, low down, with leather belts. At a central table sat the Strike Committee under its president, a compositor named Khroustoloff—or Nosar, as his real name was—a man of about thirty-five, pale, grey-eyed, with long fair hair, not a strong man, and then worn out with excitement and sleeplessness. For the committee sat in permanence all night and day, and when I left at an early hour of the morning, nearly all the delegates were still there, discussing for their lives. The question was whether to declare another general strike in hope of winning the eight-hours' day. After listening with the imperturbable patience of mountains to innumerable reports from various parts of Russia, the executive withdrew to consider their decision, and the delegates were called into groups by trade: "Weavers, this way, please!" "Railwaymen, this way!" "Engineers, here!" So it went on till at last the executive re-entered. Their decision was against another general strike; wisely against it, for the terror of the general strike was wearing thin, and the Government were already taking heart to pursue the customary policy of imprisonment and execution. But in that meeting of the Strike Committee I was watching the origin of the Soviet

which, in twelve years' time, was to make itself known to all the world, and I have since been told that Trotsky himself was present.

In St. Petersburg itself I made many friends during that happy and hopeful time. Most of them, among the Russians, were Social Democrats, pledged to the strictest doctrine of Karl Marx ; some were Social Revolutionists, favouring the peasants rather than the town-workers, and more inclined to "terror" as their instrument in overthrowing the tyranny ; others were Anarchists, a small party, also inclined to terror, but violently opposed to the idea of a State as such and protesting against centralisation, bureaucracy, and the infringement of personal liberty in any form. Like nearly all Englishmen, I was by nature most drawn to the Anarchists, but Revolutionists of all degrees extended to me an amiable welcome, and a tolerance which they were far from displaying towards each other. In one political club, for instance, I found the long room that served as restaurant sharply divided between Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists, one end being held by each party, with no communication over the neutral ground. The young men and maidens sang different songs at each end at the same time ; but all were serious, nobly serious, as indeed people are likely to be when their cause is a matter of life and death. I talked there in German to one girl of seventeen. She was a Pole, but I have forgotten to which party she belonged, and so had she. ' Fair, with a high forehead, small, straight nose, firm little mouth, and clear, shining eyes, like ice,' was my description of her, and she insisted to me upon the entirely equal comradeship existing between men and women in the "Movement." But alas ! she had to admit one weak point : " There are a few light and rather pretty girls," she said with a sigh, " who almost spoil it all. I cannot understand them either logically or psychically. I cannot speak to them, their mentality is so difficult to understand. With me all men in the Movement are comrades and nothing

else." She had herself endured a sham marriage with a student in order to get a passport to the University, but I wonder if she ever came to understand those "rather pretty" girls any better, logically or psychically.

Hearing that violent revolution had already broken out in Caucasian Georgia and in the Baltic Provinces, I stood in doubt to which region I should hasten. But the doubt did not last long, for the appeal of the mountains was irresistible as usual, and to reach the Caucasus I must go through Moscow. So to Moscow I went, my happy fate as usual guiding me to the centre of trouble. In that beautiful city, with her white churches surmounted by bulbous domes of brilliant blue or glittering gold, minute snow was lashing through the streets, and thawing as it fell. Trailing and slithering in disorder through the slush and wind, came a loose string of soldiers, led by a handful of ragged cavalry on hairy little horses. Half a battalion of foot followed them, covered with filth, their uniforms torn and patched, some in low flat caps, some in high and furry caps, matted with mud and snow. Their faces were yellow, thin, and seemed bemused with wonder. Behind the infantry dragged a rambling line of various carts, and in the carts were stretched muffled and pallid forms, bound up with dirty and bloodstained bandages. It was the dismal procession of heroes returning from war, the first instalment of the ruined army which had gone out to fight Japan, and at last they were completing the sum of 5,000 or 6,000 miles of travel from the starving East. Down the dirty streets they drifted and disappeared, the reservists being discharged at barracks and going to swell the crowd of beggars who, with threats or blessings, violently demanded the milk of human kindness at every corner. But one night I came upon a group of them seated around a fire which they had lighted in the middle of the street. They were staring like imbeciles into the flames, but one of them, swaying gently to and fro, continually repeated the soothing words: "At home and alive! At home and alive!"

Next day (December 16, 1905) I drove up a long hill to a plateau over which the snow was drifting with such violence that the huge black horse dragging the sledge kept facing round as though to appeal to us as reasonable beings to return. Horizon, track, and every mark were lost in whirling grey, but after we had dubiously advanced for two or three hours, the snow stopped and gleams of sun peered through purple clouds. Then indeed I beheld the beauty of Russia. Flat line after flat line of whitened plain extended before me, sometimes touched with pale crimson by the low and wintry sun, sometimes silvery as a distant sea. Long streaks of forest came into view, looking brown or purple in the distance, though chiefly made up of young silver-birch trees, their silky white stems flecked with black. I saw a few oaks and an occasional pine, but birch was the prevailing tree, because it burns best, and supplied almost the only fuel for Moscow, and even for such locomotives as could not get oil. Birch logs filled most of the little wooden sledges that passed us now and then, drawn by miserable ponies so caked with mud that their furry coats looked like a crocodile's armour. The peasants floundered alongside, clothed in sheepskin jackets, gathered round the waist with belts that made the skirts stick out as some shelter to the high top-boots of felt or bast, rarely of leather. The men wore caps, the women knotted handkerchiefs or shawls. Otherwise there was no difference in outward appearance.

At last we came to a village, typical of that part of Russia, which was neither rich nor starving. About forty wooden cottages ran along each side of the road in single file, thatched for the most part, but, in some cases, roofed with iron plates painted green, as is the Russian way. Each cottage had a separate wattle shed for fodder and stores, but in winter the cattle lived in the dwelling-houses, so as to enjoy the warmth of the stove radiating into both compartments of the interior. By invitation, I entered one of the cottages, passing

through the animals compartment, where a sickly cow was dragging out the winter.

While I was conversing through my German-speaking friend about the payments still to be made for the land since the liberation of the serfs forty years before, an old man entered with a canvas bag over his shoulder, sat down as for an afternoon call, and joined in the conversation, casually laying his bag on the table with its mouth open. Just as we were going out again, the women, as though by stealth, slipped some squares of black bread into the bag, and the old man swung it over his shoulder and walked off, without further remark on either side. That was the way of keeping old or unfortunate people alive till better days might dawn, and to me it seemed an improvement upon our workhouse, casual wards, or Charity Organisation Society.

Tolstoy's country house, Yasnaia Poliana or "Bright Plain" was near the village; I had introductions to him from friends of his, and, with his usual generosity, he received me at the door of his separate room, half study, half carpenter's shop. He spoke English at first, not very well, and getting tired of the effort, turned to German, which he spoke much more easily. Almost at once he began on the land. A manifesto from the Tsar proclaiming the right of the peasants to the land, he said, would be the best solution of the present troubles. Less than a third of the cultivated land was held by the peasants, and less than a quarter of the cultivable land was used at all. There was plenty of support in the land if only it were decently cultivated, being first restored to the real workers on Henry George's or some similar plan. He quoted Henry George once or twice, and referred to Peter Kropotkin's books on "intensive culture." Indeed, Kropotkin interested him very much, and he enquired if he were coming back to Russia, thinking he might return with safety then.¹ With their long experience of a

¹ But Kropotkin did not return till after the Revolution of 1917; and, as an Anarchist, he was not welcomed by the centralised Bolshevik Government.

communal system, the peasants, he said, could manage very well for themselves, without any State at all, as had been proved by the communal colonies settled in Siberia. For Communism ran in the Russian blood, and among the peasants the idea had never been lost.

When I observed that perhaps the industrial towns must be considered, too, he looked rather depressed and said :

“ Yes, the town influence is our greatest danger. Towns are the places where mankind has begun to rot, and, unhappily, the rottenness is spreading. The mistake of our Liberal politicians is that they are always preaching the blessings of some English or American constitution. But those constitutions, having once been realised, have already become things of the past. They belong to a different age from ours, and an ideal, whether in statesmanship or art, is never a thing of the past, but always of the future. For Russia we ought to aim at something entirely different from your worn-out methods of government.”

With a touch of increasing solemnity, he then proceeded :

“ You are a young man ” (I was getting on for fifty then), “ and I am old, but as you grow older you will find, as I have found, that day follows day, and there does not seem much change in you, till suddenly you hear people talking of you as an old man. It is the same with an age in history ; day follows day, and there does not seem to be much change, till suddenly it is found that the age has become old. It is finished ; it is out of date. ✓

“ The present movement in Russia is not a riot ; it is not even a revolution ; it is the end of an age. The age that is ending is the age of Empires—the collection of smaller States under one large State. There is no community of heart or thought between Russia, Finland, Poland, the Caucasus, and all our other States and races. What have Hungary,

Bohemia, Styria, or the Tyrol to do with Austria? No more than Ireland, Canada, Australia, or India has to do with England. People are beginning to see the absurdity of these things, and in the end people are reasonable. That is why the age of Empires is passing away.

“They tell me, for instance, that if the Russian Empire ceased to exist, swarms of Japanese would overrun our country and destroy our race. But the Japanese also are reasonable people, and if they came and found how much better off we were without an Empire, they would go home and imitate our example.”

After this conversation he led me into a long room where his large family (except his wife, who was from home) were gathered for dinner, together with various relations and friends. They received me with Russian courtesy, speaking to me in German or in English, which two of the women spoke a little and one perfectly. She was the wife of the eldest son, a pleasant, easy man, with the aspect of an English squire. In fact the whole scene was like a house-party in an English country house, and the guests had been beguiling their leisure with making embroidery, playing battledore with racquets and a soft ball, pushing a marble up a kind of bagatelle board, examining their guns, and walking with the dogs.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DAYS OF MOSCOW

IN MOSCOW everyone was wondering what line the moving finger of history would write next. I wandered up and down the city from conference to conference or from friend to friend. For the moment we were still revelling in liberty, living under an anarchy almost fit for the angels, who by their divine nature are a law unto themselves. But, unhappily, it was a liberty modified by murder, and for some weeks a murder a day upon the streets was a fairly constant average. Bare-footed, long-haired beggars, the very heroes of Maxim Gorki's tales, the ragged supermen of misery, sprang from obscure corners. People walked warily, keeping one eye behind them, and turning sharply about if they heard goloshes padding upon the snow. Often at night, as I went up and down the rampart of the Kremlin, and watched those ancient white temples and their gilded domes glittering under the moon, I noticed that any passer-by would skirt round me in an arc, or if he came suddenly upon me, he ran. My intentions were far from murderous, but all of us were living in the haggard element of fear ; not having yet realised that the only decent way to live is to take your life in one hand and your money in the other, and both hands open.

On December 20, having heard of severe fighting in the Caucasus, and of a communal form of society set up in Georgia, I bought a ticket for Baku, and settled myself comfortably down in the nice warm train, which was crowded with humble families going home or to relations for Christmas. Waiting is never unusual in Russia, but after an hour

or two I felt an uneasy movement in the air and perceived that the engine had been uncoupled, and the steam from the heating pipes was rushing out, leaving the train cold as a corpse. "General strike at noon!" cried a porter, and gathering up a few things I had selected to cheer the journey, I emerged. The registered luggage could not be recovered, and ultimately it went duly down the line to Baku, together with hundreds of dying geese and ducks, loads of vegetables, and barrels of sugar that made the train like an enormous Christmas hamper, and taught many a hungry peasant on the route the delightful significance of the holy festival. But the families who had looked forward to such a happy journey with their bottles of milk and baskets of food, were only with difficulty induced to leave the train, and most of them pitched their little encampments in the station waiting-room, and so remained for a fortnight, the atmosphere becoming every day less and less like the perfumes of Arabia.

That afternoon the "Movement" proceeded to cut off the city's supply of gas, electricity, and water. The water was restored in a day or two, for the characteristic reason that the poor were suffering for want of it. But for the remainder of the disturbances we sat or walked in darkness through all the long hours of the Russian night. And the disturbances soon began. For one more day the revolutionists hesitated. They told me they were not ready. They had a lot of revolvers (chiefly the automatic Brownings), but only eighty rifles, and no guns. They thought they might be ready by April. But the Government was ready now. While a party of revolutionists were discussing time and space in the top story of a tall house called "Fiedler's," just opposite the British Consulate, the Government brought up two or three guns and poured shells into the building at fifty-yards' range. A bomb was thrown in return. On both sides a few were killed, and so the bloodshed began. It was the night of December 22-3, 1905.

Of course it was my duty to see everything possible, but many peaceful citizens took equal risks merely for the fun of the thing, or just to maintain the habitual routine that all men love, or to lay in provisions for Sunday, or as being possessed by the curious instinct which drives even the gentlest men and women against their will to witness war and death. Thick groups gathered under shelter of street corners, or up passages, or even behind the porches of big shops and banks, and every now and then someone would rush across the open just for sport. So it was that the cook in my little hotel, leaving his kitchen to see the fun, got a bullet in his heart and cooked no more. So it was that, as I was crossing the Boulevards near the Pushkin statue, a rosy workgirl with a shawl over her head ran towards me, through the cover of the snowy trees, and just as she reached me I saw a little red splash on her cheek. She stood still, gasping with astonishment, and then sat down in the snow, crying at the sight of her blood, while I tried to mop it up with my handkerchief. But finding it was only a cut and not a hole, I signalled to her to run, and away she went for the Petrovka, screaming for her life. Directly afterwards I came upon a well-dressed woman, possibly a revolutionist, who had been shot through the skirt and was bleeding horribly, though a man kept twisting two handkerchiefs round her thigh. We carried her about a hundred yards along the Boulevard to a large house where a Red Cross flag was flying, and though we came close to the firing-party at every step, we were not fired on. I found the same kindly protection when, after running back at full speed along the Boulevard, I turned sharply left into the Mala Dmitrovka, which was deserted but for one man, who was hurrying along with his head down. Suddenly he fell down just in front of me. He too had been shot in the thigh and the blood was running over his boot and soaking through his trousers. I signed to him that there was an ambulance on the Boulevard not far away, and, putting his arm round my neck he began

to hop back. But the pain was too great, and he was turning green. Laying him down on a doorstep I tried to stop the flow by binding a handkerchief over his trousers, for it was too deadly cold to take them off. But this was useless and he was becoming unconscious, when I perceived some faces watching us from a window. I waved to them, and three men and a girl came out, bringing a chair, on which we carried him back into the Boulevard and to the Red Cross house. On leaving him there I perceived that from first to last we had been exposed to sharpshooters posted on the tower of the Strastnoi Convent close by, and all our running and caution had been useless.

Going up early in the morning of the third day (it was our Christmas Day), I saw little change, and yet I felt that all was over but the running. I was quickly surrounded by revolutionists, who seemed displeased with me, and were still painfully well armed with revolvers. On working backwards towards the centre, I came upon troops still firing, searching, and arresting, and they seemed equally displeased at the presence of a foreigner. The fighting continued throughout the day, but I still felt that the revolution was over; all the more when, in the evening, the revolutionists offered six shillings and a revolver to anyone who would join for three more days' service. More still when one of the leaders told me that this outbreak was only a dress-rehearsal, and the real performance was coming later. Of course he was right. The real performance came twelve years later, but what part the actors in the dress-rehearsal took in that final performance I cannot say.

On December 31, I contrived to penetrate through the cordon of troops and guns into the centre of the factory district, and found nearly all the buildings still pouring out volumes of smoke and flame. The wretched survivors had hoisted white flags wherever they could stick them and were trying to get away with such bits of things as remained—feather beds, furniture, cooking utensils, and the toys

already bought for Christmas. When they came to the line of soldier pickets, every box or bundle was searched and the contents thrown out upon the snow. The people also were searched, the soldiers thrusting their hands into the breasts and under the skirts of the girls and young women. I saw one girl searched in this way six times within twenty yards. "God spit at them!" muttered the women as they crawled away. The thermometer stood at 18 degrees of frost, and there was no shelter left.

Next day (January 1, 1906) I found the ruins were held by Cossacks and the Guards, and the bodies of three leaders whom they had just bayoneted were lying outside a shed. The remaining revolutionists were cooped up in a sugar-mill yard, while the leaders were sorted out for execution. These were brought forward in batches, and shot down by a firing-party, three at a time, till a heap of dead was piled up. Two of them, perhaps as a practical joke, were ordered to march round a corner as though they were free. They went carelessly, with their hands in their pockets, but when they turned the corner, they were faced by eight rifles at the present, and in an instant they fell dead. Such executions went on in that district and throughout Moscow for a full week, and even if only a tenth part of the other abominations reported to me were true, I could not speak of them. For the horror of the deeds was too atrocious to be thought of, if we would retain any belief in the human kind as being on as high a level as the apes.

From Moscow I passed down to the city of Kieff, which is the market for the land of "Black Earth"—the deposit of fertile soil which then supplied wheat for England and much of Europe. In those days Russia's exports were valued at £96,000,000 and the export of grain alone came to rather more than half that sum, naphtha running a poor second, and eggs a good third. In spite of the usual superstitious rumours about danger among the peasants, I drove far out through the scattered villages, and was surprised to find

how poverty-stricken the people were, though they fed so many foreigners in distant lands. Most of the cottages had no furniture at all, except two beds (one on top of the stove, but both entirely destitute of bedding), and the Russian cradle which is worked up and down by a lever from the ceiling instead of being rocked to and fro by hand or foot. There was not even a table, a chair or a chest. The bed served for seat, table, and all. The stove was warmed with straw, for though I passed through the largest forests I had seen in Russia, they all belonged to the Tsar, and no one there might gather a stick.

Proceeding to Odessa across a desolate steppe, I found the Black Sea city silent in the grasp of the Black Hundred or "Order of Russian Men"—silent but for an occasional bomb exploding in the main square, or the occasional murder of a policeman. Two days after the outburst of joy at the Tsar's October Manifesto, the Governor-General, instigated by Trepoff in St. Petersburg, had ordained a vast demonstration of the Black Hundred, who, impelled by their religious convictions and lust for stolen goods, had assaulted the Jews with ecclesiastic violence, and laid the whole city for three days at the mercy of law and order. As nearly as possible the Jews formed half Odessa's population of 600,000 living bodies, so that the game for the religious sportsmen stood thick on the ground, and as there was no opposition and no escape, heavy slaughter and adequate pillage rewarded Christian devotion.

The whole city was wretched. Most of the religious plunder had gone in drink and women. The rich had taken flight. The University was shut, the Jewish schools were shut. The few soup kitchens for relief were a pitiful sight. Yet in the midst of it all I found the party soon to be famous as "The Cadets" (Constitutional Democrats) toiling at their programme for a Constituent Assembly, Home Rule for the various nationalities within the Empire, and a vast agrarian reform.

Then I returned to St. Petersburg. I used to attend meetings of those "Cadets," in a quiet little hall off the Nevsky Prospekt, and listen to their long and abstract discussions, so beloved by the Russian nature, and so futile in a time of crisis.

There I met Professor Miliukoff, who became and remained the leader of the "Cadets," to be known throughout Europe in after years for his courageous denunciation of Rasputin and other reptiles of Tsardom ; for his brief service as Foreign Minister (with strongly Imperialistic leanings) during the earlier revolution of 1917 ; and for his steady opposition to the Bolsheviks for their breach of democracy and of constitutional methods. He was then a bright-eyed, robust, and florid man, a middle-aged grey-haired youth, abounding in unreasonable and unquenchable hope. He told me that the reaction could not last long. The Moscow rising he regarded as a great mistake, driving him almost to despair. He thought that all the educated and well-to-do people would be set permanently against any change. But the Government's violence had kept them on the side of the Revolution, because they were as much sickened by the slaughter as other people, and had learnt that the Government was the real party of destruction and disorder. "Why !" he cried in his almost perfect English. "The reaction is already over ! The spirit of the thing is dead." Hope is a leader's most essential quality, but how mistaken even hope may be !

I induced Robert Crozier Long to accompany me over to Kronstadt across the frozen sea, and early one morning, from the village of Oranienbaum on the Gulf of Finland, we put to sea in a sledge. The tempest called the *vouga* was raging, and driven by a south-west wind, the whirling snow obscured the wide expanse of frozen water so that we could not see from one to another the little Christmas trees stuck in the ice to mark the only path of safety. At three points small wooden huts had been erected as shelters for the lost or frozen. Lanterns on high poles glimmered through the

darkness, and, pulled up by little windmills, deep-toned bells tolled at intervals. Here and there the ice was piled up by the current, showing a sharp green edge, and at one place a few planks had been thrown across a gaping crack, which split the white field of sea with a dark line of water stretching out on either hand till lost in the storm. It was an evidence of my usual good fortune that the lost and almost blinded driver contrived to hit upon those few planks. The drive across the sea, being only about six miles, should take half an hour, but both going and returning it took us an hour and a half.

On my way through the Baltic Provinces, travelling by night, I was able to fulfil one of many little services to the cause. For when I came to Pakoff, I threw open the carriage window, as I had been instructed, and presently, as by miracle or melodrama (which is the same thing), a human hand was for a moment protruded through it and immediately withdrawn, taking with it a scrap of paper that I held ready under my coat. At dawn I was in Riga, just in time as I quitted the station to see twenty-five men lying in a row upon the sandhills where they had been shot, tied together by feet and arms. So it went on all the time I remained in that beautiful old German town and the Lettish provinces surrounding it. Every day little groups of Letts—men, women, and boys—were hurried by escorts of Russian soldiers away to the sandhills to be shot, usually with a crowd following, much as a crowd follows sheep or bullocks to the slaughter-house. I saw boys bayoneted before my hotel window, and shot against the wall of the old castle tower. The morning papers had no news but accounts of the shootings, hangings, and floggings at various places out in the country. When I drove far away among the woods and low hills of that beautiful region, I found the people hiding in caves or up the firs and holly trees, in terror of the patrolling bands of Cossacks. Discovering my sympathies, the German-speaking Letts who owned the sledge spread warnings as we

went by various cries and signals, sometimes inducing the refugees to emerge from their coverts and converse. At Segewold, where the Russian General Orloff had made his headquarters, my driver told me he had heard an officer give the order by telephone for a firing-party of ten to attend next morning at six without fail and shoot three prisoners, who were present in the room as he spoke. It was like ordering the funeral lunch in the hearing of a dying man.

Though the habitual executions were proceeding in the neighbouring town of Mitau, my visit there was cheered by the presence of a typical old German parson, who, in succession to his father, had served the people there for sixty years. He remembered Goethe's death, and was a master of German literature. But his chief delight had been the collection of Lettish songs, riddles, proverbs, and legends. Over this labour he had gone blind, but, with wife and grandchildren around him, he had resolved to write one more book, to be called *The Happy Life*, when suddenly the peasants attacked his parsonage, shot his sexton, threatened his daughter, burnt his library, smashed his china, trampled on his harpsichord, and made a bonfire of his furniture in the garden, kindling it with his manuscripts. I wrote at the time :

“ ‘ But we do not regret the title of my book, do we, dear wife ? We have not lost our trust in the dear God,’ he said, bending his tall, slim figure to kiss the old lady's hand. “ ‘ No, indeed,’ she answered. ‘ We have lost our best china, but our guest will kindly excuse it.’ ”

With that touch of sweetness in my mind, I departed for Warsaw.

CHAPTER XVII

VIVE LA DUMA !

WHEN I REACHED London again, I set to work upon editors and my Liberal friends. Our Liberal Government under Campbell-Bannerman, still radiant with the hopefulness of youth, had no direct concern with the British loan given to Russia (which marked, I think, the beginning of that Entente which led to unexpected and overwhelming results), that being a matter of private finance, and therefore below suspicion of conscience, so that my little power of knowledge and statement had no effect upon it. But in close alliance with H. N. Brailsford, as so often, and encouraged by an interview with Mr. Herbert Gladstone, then Home Secretary, I perhaps did succeed in securing some mitigation in an Aliens Bill, which otherwise would have given the Russian Secret Police a fatal grip upon political refugees in this country. Much of my time in those months, and indeed for many years later, was thus occupied in endeavouring further to check the tendency towards a military and political understanding with Russia as a balance against Germany's growing trade and naval development. Nor was it only my natural horror at the Tsardom's bloodthirsty cruelty that prompted these vain but persistent endeavours. For I had already in those few months seen so much of official Russia's corruption and general incompetence that I could not attribute much value to her official assistance in any prolonged enterprise requiring patience and honest organisation. Even apart from the official classes, I had also found in the Russian nature a peculiar indifference to considerations of

time and space ; and, when it comes to war, time and space are important elements.

On May 3, I started for Russia again, being asked to send letters about the meeting of the new Duma for the *Westminster Gazette*. On reaching St. Petersburg, I found reaction doing its utmost to impede the coming Duma. Old Goremykin, obsolete even for a Conservative, had just succeeded Witte as Prime Minister, with Stolýpin, as Minister of Interior, and Isvolsky at the Foreign Office. Witte's legacy was a set of " New Fundamental Laws " composed for the Tsar's aid in holding the Duma in check, leaving the Tsar as " Autocrat " with the right to veto, the appointment of the Executive, and the control of nearly all finance.

For its birthplace Trepoff chose the Coronation Hall in the Winter Palace, columned with marble, and decorated with the gold and crimson hideousness to which emperors and kings are obliged to grow accustomed. At the end of the hall, upon a few steps, stood a gilded throne, over which was thrown a robe of ermine and yellow silk in studied negligence. At the four corners round the throne were placed little gilded camp-stools, on which, in my ignorance, I suppose the four little princesses (poor girls !) were to sit. But I was wrong : the stools were reserved for the crown, the sceptre, the great seal, and the orb, glittering with many diamonds, since dispersed, who knows to what quarters of the world, or in what insinuating sweetmeats conveyed ? In front stood a praying-desk and table, covered with cloth of gold, supporting the miraculous ikon of Christ's head, brought from the old palace of Peter the Great and so dusty that the attendant priests had to spend some labour in polishing it clean. A large choir of men and boys, in cassocks of crimson and gold to match the furniture, was drawn up behind.

On the right of the throne, the Council of Empire ranged themselves, with Senators bright as tulips, Ministers planted with flowers and foliage of gold lace down their coats, a whole " school " of Admirals (if one may borrow the marine

phrase for porpoises), Field-M Marshals and Generals radiant in gold and silver, and the Holy Synod in all the panoply of holiness. On the breasts of the uniforms, stars, crosses, and medals gleamed and rattled so thick that one could only hope the heroes would not live to deserve more decorations, for which there would be no room, so amazing had been the courage or wisdom of every heart. Presently the members of the newly-elected Duma came trooping in, and took their stand on the left—sturdy peasants for the most part, variegated by a Catholic Bishop, some Tartar Mullahs, a Balkan peasant, four monks, and a few gentlemen in evening dress. So the two crowded lines stood facing each other : on one side the nobility and officials, pale, bald, fat, like a hideous masquerade of a senile nursery ; on the other representatives of the people—young, alert, and sunburnt, with brown and hairy heads, dressed like ordinary mankind, and straining for the future chance.

The service over, the priests and Empresses stood aside, and summoning up all the initiative in his nature, the Tsar slowly mounted the steps, faced round to the assembly, and sat down upon the negligent ermine robe. A decorated official handed him a parchment scroll, and he stood up to read. Destiny had granted the little man another great opportunity, and again he refused it. With every sentence the hopes of the new age faded, and as commonplace succeeded commonplace, amid the customary appeals to God, and the expression of such affection as monarchs, with unaccustomed agreement, invariably feel for their subjects, it was realised that no concession was made, no conciliation attempted. When the end came, and the banners waved, and the band played, and the aristocrats and officials shouted " Hurrah ! " the members of the Duma stood silent.

I followed the Deputies to the Taurida Palace, and on my way I could see the political prisoners waving handkerchiefs or towels from the barred windows of the Cross prison, and at the door of the Duma I heard the air resounding with

shouts of "Amnesty !" and "Freedom !" But the Tsar had not the grace to concede amnesty to the thousands of prisoners held in torment or monotony because their political views did not coincide with his, and the first gleam of freedom was soon to be overcast.

For two months more the First Duma continued its struggle, demanding a Civil Liberties Act and a wide Agrarian Reform. They further demanded investigation into an atrocious torture-chamber discovered at Riga, and into a furious massacre perpetrated at Bielostock, and deliberately instigated by the Ministry of the Interior. But it was on the Agrarian question that the Tsar chose to take action. He dissolved the Duma by *ukase* on July 21, ten weeks and two days after its assembly, and appointed Stolýpin to succeed Goremykin as Prime Minister. So the unhappy men, Tsar and Prime Minister, took one further step towards the fate awaiting both.

The dissolution of the Duma was the occasion of a small but peculiar coincidence in my own case. After my return to London, I had done my utmost by writing leaders and letters in the Liberal papers to discourage the British Government's intention of sending the Fleet to Kronstadt on a complimentary voyage. Many similar protests appeared, and these were strongly supported by Russian Liberals, who regarded the visit as likely to bolster up the autocracy, especially on the financial side. On the other hand, Sir Edward Grey, speaking as Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons (July 5), maintained that the visit must be carried through, but that it was intended to promote a good understanding with the whole Russian people, and not merely as a compliment to the Court. It was with all the greater satisfaction that on July 14 we heard that the Fleet's visit had been abandoned in accordance with the express wish of the Russian Government itself. No precise reason was given, but we were perhaps right in attributing the happy result to our opposition, of which the Russian Court was certainly

aware. So it was natural that when the news of the Duma's dissolution reached us, Robert Donald should ask me to write the leader upon it in the *Daily Chronicle*. At the end of the leader I wrote in italics, "La Duma est morte ! Vive la Duma !" but when the proof came down for correction, I looked at the words once or twice, and then crossed them out as being rather commonplace and obvious.

It so happened that the very next morning, representatives from the Parliaments of the world were gathered in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords for an International Peace Conference, to which Russia had sent six deputies on behalf of the youngest of Parliaments. The whole place buzzed with the news that had just appeared in the morning papers. Speaking in French, Lord Weardale addressed a welcome to the whole body of delegates, and there was a murmur of applause at the end of every sentence. But a sense of expectation and excitement still hung over the crowded audience, till at last the wished-for moment came : "And especially," said our President with marked emphasis, "especially I desire to welcome among us those representatives who have come to speak on behalf of the Russian Duma." We heard no more. The whole assembly rose to its feet, waving hats and shouting, "Bravo !" "Duma ! Duma !" The six Russians stood in line, bowing again and again. There they stood before us for that great moment in Westminster—leaders of Russia's endeavour to free herself from ancient tyranny. They bowed and smiled, but in what whirlpool of subsequent history they have since been submerged I do not know.

Lord Weardale then called upon the Prime Minister, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman came quietly forward, looking round upon the enthusiastic audience with his characteristic mixture of easy-going benevolence and shrewd good sense. He read from carefully prepared notes written in French, and after some general remarks on peace and the progress of arbitration, he came to the subject of our excitement :

"I cannot refrain from saying for myself," he said, "and I am sure for everyone in this great and historic assembly, how glad we are to welcome among us the representatives of the youngest of Parliaments—the Russian Duma."

After a tactful reference to the services of the Tsar in convening the first Hague Conference on Peace, he continued :

"I make no comment on the news which has reached us this morning. This is neither the place nor the moment for such comment. It is not for us either to praise or blame. We have not a sufficient acquaintance with the facts to be in a position to justify or criticise. But this at least we can say to those who base their hopes and confidence on the Parliamentary system : new institutions often have a disturbed if not a stormy youth. In one form or another, the Duma will revive. The Duma is dead ! Long live the Duma !"

As he uttered those words, "*La Duma est morte ! Vive la Duma !*" the memory of my action of a few hours before in cutting them out from the last line of my leader in the *Chronicle* office came to me. Why had I done it ? The words were now obviously in their right place. They were received with inexpressible rapture by that vast and excited audience. They echoed round the world. They gave the Prime Minister a new reputation for courage as the champion of freedom, though he had already shown courage in an unpopular cause. They raised a Peace Conference to historic dignity. The advocates of reaction called them outrageous. The supporters of the Russian *Entente* abandoned hope. The "King's Friends" rebuked them as disloyal. But the hearts of all who had fought for freedom and peace leapt for joy. If I had let the words stand at the end of my article, who would have noticed them ? They would have been taken as read, and, what would have been far worse, if the Prime Minister's private secretary had seen them, he would probably have advised the Prime Minister to avoid their repetition. If ever

there was a case of providential and plenary inspiration, it breathed upon my pen when I scratched them out. For it is not the thing said that counts, but the person who says it. And one man may steal a horse, while another may not look over the hedge.

That summer of 1906 was a strangely unhappy time for me, partly because of this Russian question and the well-founded fear that, no matter how firmly Campbell-Bannerman and some of his Cabinet might stand against it, a political and military agreement with the Tsar's Government was being surreptitiously promoted by sinister influences above them and below. Lewis Hind remarked to me at that time that Bishop Ingram of London came to the boil every Thursday so as to enforce his weekly denunciation of vice. But the threatened *Entente* with the Tsar brought me to the boil every morning, which was six times worse. I had personal reasons for unhappiness too. The leavings of Africa kept me in perpetual torment night and day, for I still hoped for a remedy and had not then acquiesced in suffering incurable. Besides, my livelihood was very uncertain, though I still wrote frequent leaders for the *Chronicle*. I had no regular Staff position, and the *Tribune*, which promised golden joys, was already on the slope to perdition. My expenses for my daughter's excellent musical education, and for my son's continuance in ignorance at a great public school were heavy, and the future of both was dubious. But, on looking back, I can see now that I had not much reason for despair, except my haunting shyness and self-distrust. The work that came to me unasked in those months was sufficient both in variety and amount, though the pay did not tempt to avarice. I was sent by the *Chronicle* to investigate the evil rumours about conditions in the Potteries ; and afterwards to describe the Naval Manœuvres of the year. Then Alfred Spender, of the *Westminster*, asked me to write a series of articles on religious instruction in the Board Schools and Church Schools of London. These varied tasks I performed,

and much besides, so that it is hard now to understand why I was perpetually oppressed with a sense of failure, futility, and dreary inaction.

But all the time the Russian reaction was raging. Miliukoff was in London. We admirers gave him a dinner, and I saw much of him, but whether our next step came from his encouragement or suggestion I am not certain. The idea was to send out a deputation of various Liberals conveying a Manifesto of sympathy and admiration signed by 120 members of Parliament and a few others to the disbanded Duma and their President, Muromtzeff. "All went well," as the papers say of a train on its way before the accident, until news came that the Black Hundred were preparing to meet this innocent deputation on the frontier with violence and sudden death. They even specified the horrors awaiting us, for we were to be torn limb from limb the moment we set foot on Russian soil. On hearing of our proposal, all the reactionary papers in London went equally rabid. *The Times* and the *Morning Post* raged against these "fools" and "busybodies." The *Daily Mail* telegraphed to its correspondent in St. Petersburg to watch us from the frontier and pour scorn and ridicule on us at every step—a brief and easy task if we had been torn limb from limb. Sir Edward Grey silently disapproved. Spender, who spoke for him in the *Westminster*, urged the beauty of caution and the charm of golden mediocrity. He was kind enough to say that we were all such notably brave men, that if we turned back no one could accuse us of cowardice. Certainly there were some on our little committee whom no one could accuse, for Sir George Scott Robertson, one of the heroes of Chitral, was with us. Yet even he began to hesitate, and so did others of great place and standing. Brailsford and Pethick Lawrence almost alone stood out, urging that even a relic or a rump of the party should go, but Brailsford could not obtain a passport for himself. At last, rather than have the proposal fizzle out altogether, I suggested that I should carry the document

alone, as I happened to be going to Russia for the *Chronicle* and *Harper's Monthly* in any case, hoping to visit the disturbed regions in the Caucasus. And this was agreed to. Perhaps the committee could do nothing more decisive, but still I wish we had tried to go as a party, if only to defy the London papers. For it is very probable that we should not have been torn limb from limb, and if we had been, our fate might have averted that agreement with the Tsardom which gave Germany the excuse of fear—fear of “encirclement” on east, west, and the sea. It might even have averted the Great War itself, and by our scattered limbs many millions of lives might have been saved, and the world spared its present load of incalculable misery.

For myself, I kept my own limbs together by two very simple devices that would have deceived no one but simple-minded Russians. Instead of travelling to the frontier where the loyal Tsarists were awaiting me with hatchets, saws, and other implements of butchery, I went by Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Helsingfors, whence I sailed quietly up to the St. Petersburg landing-stage, and passed through the lines of officials without a word, or a limb shed. As a second precaution I had stuffed the precious parchment under my shirt, without appearing any fatter than a bourgeois citizen of middle age usually is.

As I carried secret despatches from our crippled Consul Cooke of Helsingfors, I called at once at the British Embassy in St. Petersburg, and had a long conversation with Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock), famous Ambassador and Foreign Office guide, who had known most of this world and was then to stay in St. Petersburg four fateful years longer.¹ He appeared to me as a smallish, stooping, rather lame, blue-eyed man, with reddish hair ; polite, grave, and expressing ignorance in the Oxford manner. He had evidently heard a good deal about my coming, and said he was relieved that the deputation had remained at home,

¹ Lord Carnock died in 1924.

because he feared insults to all the English. I am not sure whether I showed him the Manifesto still reposing on my bosom, but probably I let it repose. He took a quiet and official view of the whole situation, putting much confidence in Stolýpin's honesty and good intentions ; but it was not hard to detect his purpose in furthering that Russian agreement against which our Liberal efforts were mainly directed.

As to the treasured document itself, I was entertained once to a three-hours' tea (with champagne), and once to a prolonged dinner, at both of which festivities, in Russian fashion, speeches began with the tea or soup, and so continued. Muromtzeff spoke, grave, stern, inclined to silence ; Miliukoff spoke, cheerful, smiling, voluble, and full of hope ; I spoke, badly in French, rather better in German, rather better in English, but, as usual, not remarkably well. At the dinner the document was formally presented, and duly disappeared into space.

CHAPTER XVIII

“THE NATION”

WHEN AT LAST I returned from Russia, the central arch of life's journey was already far behind me. After all the torment and wretchedness I had seen or shared in Greece, in South Africa, in Angola, in the Islands of the Gulf, and now in Russia and the Georgian province, it seemed to me that perhaps enough had been done and I might begin, in Mr. Gladstone's words, to prepare my soul for heaven. I remember saying to myself, as I settled down like Catullus, into my familiar bed :

*Sit modus lasso maris et viarum
Militiæque.*

Tired of all these, I would bid farewell to sea and wanderings and war. But it was a fond illusion. I had no time for fatigue, and the greater part of my share in sea and wanderings and war lay still in front.

All through the spring and summer of 1907 I was occupied in contending, to the best of my influence, against the impending *entente* with the Russian Tsardom, and in my prolonged struggle to spread the knowledge of the Portuguese slave-system as I had seen it in Angola and the Islands. To these contests was now added the equally disturbing contest for Woman Suffrage, as mentioned further on. But before the spring had come, still another interruption dissipated my dream of frugal leisure. In January, Henry W. Massingham, the famous editor under whom I had served on the *Chronicle*, was appointed editor of the weekly paper

then called *The Speaker*. J. L. Hammond had hitherto been editor, and I had written for him occasionally. But when the new appointment was made, he agreed, with characteristic generosity of spirit, to serve under Massingham as one of the Staff. For a few weeks the paper kept its former title, but on March 2nd it appeared for the first time as *The Nation*. Under that flag, and with that captain, it proudly sailed, often in stormy seas, for sixteen years, till, on April 28, 1923, its last number appeared as controlled by the supreme editor, who alone had created it and alone had given it influence and the prestige for courage, independence, and unflinching support of the noblest and most unpopular causes.

My own first article appeared on February 21, 1907, but it was only a review of an indifferent book, and my opportunity did not come till a week or two later, when I wrote my first "middle" (on Persia), and my second or third (on the Athenian drama of *The Persians*). I had hoped to be allowed to write "leaders," partly because they are so much easier than "middles," but chiefly that I might use them as weapons in my contests with the Russian Government and the Portuguese slavers. But Brailsford joined the Staff at the beginning, and fought against the Russian *entente* with a knowledge and skill surpassing mine, though he had never been in Russia at that time. As to the slavery, the editor never denied me letters and articles on the subject, though one of the paper's chief proprietors belonged to a great cocoa firm whose interests were deeply involved. Thus excluded from the "leaders," except on matters of which I had very special knowledge (and then my "leader" was sometimes cut all to pieces as being "too violent"—an amazing charge to bring against a man of timid moderation)—thus excluded from "leaders," I continued to write "middles" whenever I was in England.

I was quite right in supposing a "middle" to be much harder work than a "leader." A "middle" is an essay,

usually upon some subject of immediate and perhaps temporary interest—some subject that people may be talking about even at the dinner-tables of the rich and great. Being an essay, it must express personality, and the expression of personality (which is style) implies a drain and drag upon the heart, the brain, or other vital organs of the writer. During all those sixteen years, whenever I was in London, I wrote a "middle" every Tuesday or Wednesday morning, after brooding over it the previous evening and night, on each occasion tormented by the conviction that I could not possibly write on the chosen subject, but was too ignorant and unimaginative even to touch it, and should have to send in a blank that afternoon. Somehow or other the thing always got itself done, and well up to time, but it left me, for the rest of the day, stupid, numbed, almost as torpid and speechless as a corpse.

My articles were always unsigned, and besides the satisfactory but not extravagant reward of payment (£3 an article, raised to £4 during the war when the value of money had greatly declined), my only compensation for all this exhaustion was an occasional word of praise from the editor. For he was one of the few who understand that the best way to get the best work out of any servant is not by blame but by praise. I found, too, that he possessed a penetrating discernment, and praised only when, in the old phrase, "virtue had gone out of me." Such praise began early. On March 10, of my "middle" on Persia, he wrote, "I have not read a finer piece of prose." On March 26, when urging to collect my "middles" into a book, he wrote, "There is nothing so distinctive now in journalism." And again on April 10, referring to my contest for Woman Suffrage, "Dear Achilles in the garb of a woman, who has captured your soul? But there is nothing like your work in modern journalism. You beat us all." So it continued at

intervals throughout my service of sixteen years, and the praise, if given, always followed what I knew to be my best, because, as I said, virtue had gone out of me.¹

A distinctive feature of the paper and a cause of its excellence sustained for so many years was the "Nation lunch," held usually on Monday or Tuesdays at a round table in the National Liberal Club. All members of the Staff were expected to come, and some distinguished person, British or foreign, was frequently invited. The guests were generally politicians—Cabinet Ministers, leaders of parties in France, Germany, or other European countries, and sometimes in America. But many writers of high distinction came too, for one of Massingham's fine qualities was his passionate knowledge of literature, especially of the drama, and there was nothing narrow or doctrinaire about his paper or his politics. Sometimes the guest withdrew before the discussion upon the actual business of the week's issue began, but sometimes he remained, and it made no difference. Debate and criticism were absolutely free. Each gave of his best and truest, without reserve or apprehension. For myself, hampered by innate shyness and a slow-moving mind, I usually sat silent, lost in admiration of the rapidity displayed by others, their ready wit, their slashing epigrams, their knowledge of political secrets hidden from babes. But most of all I admired the editor's skill in driving that mixed and unruly team of distinguished writers with so light and steady a hand, holding them to the centre of the road, and preventing them from kicking over the traces, or even kicking each other. For, as might be expected among men of high temper and resolute convictions, stormy passions often arose. Violent contradictions, personal insults, and missiles more material flew across the table, and even I more than once had seized the tablecloth with the wild intention of clinching

¹ Some of these "Middles" were included in my *Essays in Freedom* (1909), *Essays in Rebellion* (Nisbet: 1913), and *Essays in Freedom and Rebellion* (Yale University Press and Oxford University Press: 1923).

an argument by dragging it off, like Fidgety Phil who would not keep still, when a word from the editor allayed the tempest and averted the loss of glass and viands.

At the first lunch that I attended as a member of the Staff, the genius of G. K. Chesterton was present, but I think he never came again. Perhaps his flow of conversation was too rapid, too overwhelming for what was, after all, a business assembly, gathered for other purposes than the admiration of delightful paradoxes and epigrams such as replete dinner parties may enjoy. Indeed, that man of genius has often reminded me of a village pump which, on festal occasions, may run wine, and ordinarily runs first-rate water, but never knows whether it is running wine of the best or water of the best or liquid mud or nothing at all, but always wears the same alluring look of promise. Among many who were witty, I think Chesterton's place as jester-in-chief was taken by J. A. Hobson, known so widely in both hemispheres for his original and humane theories in economics, but so little known for his wit. Yet his sudden witticisms were irresistible, and always had the further power of true revelation. They illuminated the discussion. They were "a sudden glory." And, having known the man since he was an undergrad in Oxford, quite undistinguished except as a high-jumper, I could tell when the wit was coming, anticipating it by his habit of raising the right eyebrow far above the level of the left just before it came. And I knew when the witticism was complete by the enjoyment shining through his ghostly countenance—an enjoyment that all could share. I suppose that for forty years at least the stupefying sword of death has been hanging over him by a cobweb. Is it that unmoving peril which has driven him to produce more work and finer work than almost any healthy man I have known?

And then we usually had Leonard Hobhouse with us, up to the middle of the war, when he ceased to come; I think because his opinion of Mr. Lloyd George and his policy as

Prime Minister differed from the editor's in being more favourable ; as well it might be without verging on idolatry. He brought to discussion the philosophic mind which Wordsworth hoped the years would bring to all. He brought an enviable balance and a benignity which only opposition could ruffle and the aspect of cruelty upset. But, though occupied with the comparatively concrete questions of politics and economics, he often seemed to my ignorance to be moving in unknown seas of thought where I could no more follow him than I could follow Einstein or Bertrand Russell in their exalted sphere beyond the world.

At his side might be J. Lawrence Hammond, his pale and intellectual face almost hidden in a bush of dark hair and beard, until the war transformed him into a spruce officer in the Gunners, almost beyond the recognition of his earlier and more pacific friends. To us he brought, not only his unequalled knowledge of the workers in towns and villages a century ago, and not only his knowledge of eighteenth-century politics, and the character of all politicians from that date onwards, but the keenest insight into present situations and living personalities, backed by an unfailing enthusiasm for righteousness, and an unsuspected eloquence upon public platforms. This might seem to contradict his habitual modesty, but would certainly have led to the highest position in the State had not his health deterred him from confronting the physical rather than the mental atmosphere of the House of Commons.

As for Henry Noel Brailsford, it would be impossible to exaggerate either his power of knowledge or steadiness of conviction. These qualities, combined with rapid judgment, skill in arrangement, and a singularly gracious gift of expression, would make him a model journalist. And I should so describe him, if he were not so much more. His province on the *Nation* was foreign policy, though he wrote excellent "middles" on occasion. And in treating foreign countries he possessed a faculty of writing about foreign kings, leaders,

and politicians just as though he knew them personally, and could estimate their motives and characters ; whereas to me, unless I have seen a man, he remains the shadow of a name.

In contrast with him, except in unflinching sincerity and convictions regardless of self-interest, stood Frank W. Hirst, our authority upon the practical finance of the City, and, for some years, editor of the *Economist*, until his house-keeping detestation of financial wastefulness during the war compelled his resignation. Sometimes Hirst could count upon the alliance of W. D. Morrison, Rector of Marylebone, admitted to our council chiefly for his knowledge of prisons and his long experience of sin. He had assisted the editor in exposing the abominations of the prison system some years before, and he brought to the table, not only great knowledge of his subject, but an established Liberalism, a happy freedom from religious intrusion, and a suavity of manner that ought to have soothed but sometimes only fanned our fury. He withdrew during the war because the editor's patriotism never reached the bloodthirsty standard set by bishops and other ecclesiastical shepherds for the imitation of their flocks.

Then there was Charles Masterman, whom general consent would have designated as better suited for an ecclesiastic, because he was not one. Indeed, the golden cross that for many years gleamed upon the lower part of his chest inspired religious confidence, while his ascetic existence in the poorest part of South London, his impassioned exposure of the conditions there prevailing, and something priestlike in his manner, appeared to identify him with the devoted band of young Anglicans who strove to animate their Church into a beneficent and social force, while maintaining her Catholic observances. But politics claimed him, among the rising and falling hopes of Liberalism, and he brought to our discussions a valuable knowledge of practical affairs and of Parliamentary people acquired as a member of the House

of Commons and, later, of Mr. Asquith's Cabinet. Under those circumstances, his early philanthropic and religious enthusiasms were gradually tempered by the cynicism of experience, which added shrewdness rather than wisdom to his judgment. His wit distinguished him at every meeting, and no one was more useful in guiding even the editor along a comparatively cautious political line, or in revealing the weaknesses of the political leaders in whom our ignorance was sometimes inclined to trust. As in Hammond's case, I was surprised by his power of public eloquence, and his writing on political questions showed the same eloquent power of rapidity, inclining, like most eloquence, to a persuasive diffusion. I was at times still more surprised at his readiness to compromise with evil ; for in these days my personal acquaintance with statesmanship was but slight.

During the war, probably while I was away in the Dardanelles, H. C. O'Neill joined the staff as "military expert," bringing with him a singularly accurate knowledge of all the campaigns, and a strategic judgment so acute that, at one time, it kindled the wrath of the military command and caused the paper to be banned from circulation on the French front, simply because its estimate of the situation was too painfully correct. As assistant editors on the staff we had two remarkable men in turn. First A. W. Evans (perhaps better known as "Penguin"), whose knowledge of literature, especially of last century's literature, was intimate and peculiar, and who for many years wrote a weekly page of literary discussion on those varied subjects which are always so difficult to choose. His was an Irish wit, very refreshing in the heat of our controversies, and a strongly marked sympathy with France and French literature, which led to his resignation when, during the war, the editor was inclined to favour that "peace chatter" which, if successful, would have averted the loss of many thousand innocent lives, and the incalculable burden of misery which still weighs like death upon this country and the Continent.

He was succeeded by H. M. Tomlinson, a child of the Lower Thames, traveller in unknown regions, admirable as war correspondent, and a writer of playful imagination, with an incisive humour pointed by rage. I must not forget Richard Cross, our Quaker solicitor from Yorkshire, who often attended the gatherings, and sometimes wrote, though only, I think, on his special subject of Temperance.

The staff may not seem large, but for actual weekly work it was smaller still. The editor could never count on more than Brailsford, Hobson, or Hobhouse, Hammond, Hirst, Masterman (at intervals), Morrison (at wide intervals), Evans or Tomlinson, and myself (when I happened to be in London). For the reviews he sometimes went to specialists outside the staff, but the staff did most of them, and the staff really consisted of six writers, or seven at most, not counting the editor himself, who generally wrote the first leader, and sometimes the dramatic criticism. His power as a writer, and as a political thinker too, lay in his rapid grip of the subject's very heart. Of course he made mistakes—generous mistakes, especially in his enthusiasm for politicians who afterwards betrayed his hopes. But as a rule, his penetration to the very centre of the matter was unerring, and to me a perpetual amazement. That extraordinary power, combined with judgment in the choice of his staff and his entire trust in them when chosen, was the quality that made of him the greatest editor whom I have known, and raised his paper to a height of influence even among those who eagerly read and scornfully condemned it. Though he was so excellent a writer himself, when I look back upon the paper he created and maintained for sixteen years, I can but recall our Fleet Street saying: "Any bloody fool can write. It needs a heaven-born genius to edit."

Throughout that summer of 1907 I continued also working for the *Chronicle* under Robert Donald, writing occasional leaders and special articles, as when I made one of my rare visits to the debates in the House of Commons, and

listened for three solid hours while Mr. Haldane, as Minister of War, expounded his new Army scheme. It included the formation of the Territorials and arranged for the rapid expansion which saved France from destruction in 1914. I know many of the injustices committed during the Great War, but, unless it be the case of General Philip Howell, driven from his position as Chief of Staff to General Mahon at Salonika by the howlings of masculine and feminine malignity because he designed terms of peace with Bulgaria that would have shortened the War by two years—unless it be that case, I know of no injustice so flagrant and treacherous as the dismissal of Lord Haldane from his office as Lord Chancellor, because, being a philosopher, he had once naturally called Germany his spiritual home.

But though I had the promise of being sent out by the *Chronicle* to any war that might occur, it was for the cognate subject of peace that I was immediately sent, and never so fully as on that mission did I realise the truth of the Aristotelian axiom that the knowledge of opposites is the same. In June (1907) the second International Peace Conference was held at The Hague, and I went. Mr. and Mrs. Brailsford were there too, and in the intervals, when official futility paused, we contrived to see a good deal of Holland and the Dutch arts. And there was W. T. Stead, bouncing with vitality, running over with human kindness towards emperors, kings, peoples, and a bevy of girls alike ; exuberant for peace, and in the end calling for as many battleships as we could possibly build. And there were the representatives of Powers great and small, frock-coated, top-hatted, portentous, striving one and all to make some other Power yield an advantage without yielding a point themselves. To call that a Peace Conference was an amusing instance of ironic mockery, for nothing was further from the thoughts of all than peace. Are neutral ships to be sunk at sight in war ? Are defenceless cities to be destroyed by bombs in war ? Is poison gas a decent way of killing people in war ? These

questions were discussed, and the ultimate result was as though two farmers, long accustomed to confirm their neighbourliness by burning each other's ricks, had met for a conference upon their future behaviour and had parted amicably with the agreement in future to use safety matches only. I watched the Carnegie Palace of Peace being built. I heard that a Court of International Arbitration was being established. In seven years, August 1914 was to come.

CHAPTER XIX

A VISION OF INDIA

WHEN I LANDED IN BOMBAY (October 25, 1907) most provinces of India were troubled with "Unrest," the causes of which lay deep in history, and still remain little changed. The immediate occasions of the trouble had been gathering for a few years past, and as most of the grievances have now (1925) either been remedied or have taken different forms, I need not here discuss them beyond a bare mention. Lord Curzon had been appointed Viceroy at the end of 1898, and his term had been renewed five years later, but owing to a difference of opinion with Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief, he had resigned in 1905 and was succeeded by Lord Minto. No one can question Lord Curzon's energy and devotion during his long term of office. In his farewell speech he said :

"If I were asked to sum up my work in a single word, I would say 'Efficiency.' That has been our gospel, the key-note of our administration."

If that was a boast, Lord Curzon had full right to make it. He had proved himself efficient in every department—education, irrigation, commerce, land assessment, the control of plague and famine, and the preservation of Indian arts. But in his zeal for efficiency he had bitterly offended Anglo-Indians by inflicting just penalties upon British regiments for the concealed crimes of some among their men. And he had offended Indian feeling in various ways, especially by his Partition of Bengal (October 1905),

and by a speech addressed to the Convocation of Calcutta University (February 1905) in which he announced the doctrine that truth was rather a Western than an Oriental virtue, and that craftiness and diplomatic wiles have in the East always been held in much repute. As a protest against the Partition, the Swadeshi ("Our own Country") movement was started, especially in Eastern Bengal, for the exclusive use of native productions, and the rejection of English salt, cotton, and other goods.

Various small disturbances had followed, not only in Eastern Bengal, and Anglo-Indians feared an outbreak on the fiftieth anniversary of the Mutiny (May 10, 1907). For speeches delivered in the previous March, a young Sikh and Lala Lajpat Raj, a prominent social and religious reformer of the Arya Samaj, were then deported and imprisoned without trial under an almost forgotten Regulation of 1818. This came as a great shock to the natural enthusiasm with which the appointment of Mr. John Morley to the India Office had been received, and just at the time when I arrived in Bombay, John Morley had endeavoured to retrieve the position by a wise but irritating speech at Arbroath, in which he compared the unrest to a crying for the moon, the Indian demand for Dominion Home Rule to a demand for Canadian fur coats in the Deccan, and lamented "the tragic miscarriages of impatient idealists, such as he had once been himself." In those words he was referring to Keir Hardie, who was in India at the time, and whose speeches had been shamelessly distorted by reporters instructed to discredit him. As Keir Hardie himself said to me, "The lie goes round the world while truth is putting on her boots."

Venerable is every temple in India, and venerable the sanitary efforts of a paternal Government. But more venerable to me was a grave and monastic building that stood just beyond one of the Health Camps established in those days of the plague, from which rose the smoke of yesterday's

dead. Here dwelt the "Servants of India," and the Society's founder was waiting at the porch to receive me. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the greatest statesman I have intimately known. Born a Mahratta Brahman of the highest caste and ordinary poverty, he had thrown away the caste and kept the poverty. As a student in Bombay, he came under the influence of Justice Ranadè, also a Mahratta Brahman, Judge of the High Court, and a supporter of the Indian National Congress, sitting first in 1885, just after Lord Ripon had left the country, honoured and regretted by Indians as no Viceroy ever was, before or since. Under the influence of Ranadè and Lord Ripon, Gokhale imbibed a belief in reasonableness, and the holy hope of which the Hebrew Preacher has told us that Wisdom is the mother. But indeed a sweet reasonableness and the power of maintaining hope even under the deepest clouds of disappointment belonged to his own nature, and would have marked his actions in any case. I have not known anyone so considerate to opposition, or so equable in adversity. Add undeviating devotion to truth and absolute integrity of life, and one found in him an ideal of statesmanship not often conceived.

Ten years before I knew him, he had proved his nobility of spirit. It was in the early days of the plague's first visitation, and, under stress of frantic indignation against the methods of a paternal Government in trying to stay the plague, a British Civil Servant and a British officer had been shot while driving near Poona. Being then in London, Gokhale published charges against the methods of plague-observation by British soldiers which on his return he discovered were not supported by the promised evidence. Whereupon he offered an open apology to Lord Sandhurst and the Army, which aroused a storm of rage among his own people such as few could have lived down. But Gokhale lived it down, and just after the Partition of Bengal, he was elected President of the National Indian Congress as being the safest guide in that crisis of extreme danger (1905).

The Presidency of Bombay had also elected him as one of the Indians upon the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and when I first met him he had just returned from opposing the Seditious Meetings Bill in the Council at Simla. The appointment of John Morley to the India Office had filled all educated Indians with hope. As Gokhale said to the Indian National Congress : " Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles." Would John Morley in office, he asked, apply the principles he had learnt from Burke and Mill and Gladstone, or would he succumb to the influences of the India Office ? The Seditious Meetings Bill and the deportation of Lajpat Raj without trial increased the doubt.

In 1902 Gokhale had retired on a pension of £20 a year from a professorship at the Fergusson College (£60 a year) in Poona, and had, in 1905, founded the " Order of the Servants of India," consisting of about a dozen men pledged " to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit, and to promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people." They were under vows to earn no money for themselves, and seek no personal advantage ; to regard all Indians as brothers, without distinction of caste or creed ; to engage in no personal quarrel, and to lead a pure personal life. After novitiate, a full member was granted 50 rupees a month (say £3 6s. 8d.) for himself and his family. And the immediate objects, under Gokhale's own guidance, were to free the laborious people of India from the bondage they laid upon themselves in harassing ritual, immature marriages, and the exclusion of some fifty or sixty millions of Indians from the decencies of life—those " Untouchables " who eat animals and think they commit a mortal sin if their shadow passes across a Brahman's figure.

I met Gokhale many times again—in Surat, Bombay, and London. I saw him last in London very soon before his death

early in the Great War. But I still picture him on that evening, sitting in the refectory, where the Servants of India were gathered round him, together with friends even from the "extremist" parties, as they were then called—besides other Brahmans, desperate enough to eat beside a carnivore like myself. Among friends also was Paranjpye, Senior Wrangler of his year, Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, Head of the Fergusson College close by, famous among Europeans for his mathematical powers, and almost tolerated in Anglo-Indian society at Poona for his skill at lawn tennis. And among the Servants of India sat Srinivasa Sastri, unknown to me at the time, but since known to the world as Gokhale's successor, and the true representative of his country, whether at the Washington Conference of 1921, or at many a conference in other cities. In concession to my outlandish and clumsy habits I was allowed a table, chair, and spoon at dinner. But the sons of the country sat on boards, laid upon the floor, their backs against the walls, and in front of each of us was set half a banana leaf, neatly studded round the edge with little piles of rice, beans, and other seeds, flavours, sauces, and condiments, together with thin wheaten cakes unleavened, which, when we had eaten, having drunk water from the brazen bowls that Indians carry when they walk, we washed up by burning the banana leaves, rinsed our hands, and continued the political discussion over pomegranate seeds, orange cloves, and pan-leaves concealing betel-nuts and various spices.

A subject of laughter was a passage in the Rules of the Order :

"Its members frankly accept the British connection, as ordained in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good. Self-government on the lines of the English Colonies is their goal. This goal, they recognise, cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient work, and sacrifice worthy of the cause."

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Naturally, "the inscrutable dispensation of Providence," aroused much amusement, but Gokhale defended the phrase with grave simplicity. For indeed he was incapable of irony, as of rhetoric, speaking with no eloquence beyond the eloquence of perfect expression, and for the rest, with all his power resisting the temptation to sulky aloofness, which is so strong a temptation to enthusiasts in opposition when active efforts seem vain. Serene, modest, definite in aim and in knowledge, he continued to discourse to us, until the moon rolled westwards, and under her obscure silence I returned to the city of the plague, where the oil lamps were now extinguished, and the children asleep.

We are next in Madras—a city boasting the dry light of reason and practical logic, but hot with religious fervour, none the less : for Pascal has told us that the heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing. One day at dawn I went out to visit the god in his beautiful temple at Mailapur, not far from the widespread "Compounds" where the happy English and a few rich Indians reside, two or three miles inland from the sea and the jumbled "Black Town" of crowded "natives." There, as I stood by the edge of the temple tank covered with lotus flowers, I perceived an elderly Hindu reading at the door of his modest house. The verandah was partly arranged as a stable for the sacred cow, partly laid with mats for beggars, wanderers, or religious teachers who might be seeking shelter for the night. The Hindu had already bathed in the tank and washed his only garment of long cotton cloth, as he did every morning himself, according to the cleanly and chivalrous Indian custom. He was a schoolmaster, with a fixed salary of £3 6s. 8d. a month, and on this income he mainly supported his sons with their wives and children, all of whom lived in his house, under the direction of his widowed mother, who arranged which of the married couples should occupy the married quarters in turn, as there was not room for all. In gratitude for her services, and in reverence for motherhood,

“ which is the centre of human life,” he told me that every morning members of the family washed the widow’s feet and covered them with flowers, as though they were the feet of a divinity.

As it was a festival of Shiva, destroyer and healer, he was spending the quiet hours in meditation upon God, and reading a large volume of William James’s *Principles of Psychology*. He was himself inclined to the Monist view that the spirit of man is identical in essence with the spirit of God, but he felt no violent enmity towards the Dualists, who maintain a difference in essence. On his forehead he had painted the three upright lines of white and vermilion which represent the footprint of Vishnu, the maintainer of existence; but, here again, he felt no enmity towards the worshippers of Shiva, who draw three horizontal lines of grey or yellow earth across their brows. As a Monist, he admitted that his conception of the Universe hardly differed from Spinozism, unless he went beyond Spinoza in his belief in a universal Consciousness, the subtle waves of which he might perceive if only his mind were not too gross an instrument for perception. That instrument he had always striven to purify by clean living and the practice of concentration. He now longed only to withdraw from the world, lay aside his sacred thread—the triple thread of the Brahman—and devote to contemplation his few remaining years. How deeply I could sympathise with that longing ! But I recognised that the necessity of earning 16s. 8d. a week for the support of his patriarchal household must in his case restrain it.

The next scene was in Cuttack, the broad strip of flat alluvial land formed by the rivers that trickle or storm down from the mountains of Orissa, where tributary Chiefs and Rajahs still hold their territories, hill-tribes dwell, and elephants roam at large. The alluvial belt is under British control, but it is permeated by those uncertain rivers, which, more untameable than elephants, refuse control of any kind, and had lately flooded the region, first with water

eight feet deep above the huts of the inhabitants, and then with sand three feet deep above the rice crops.

I came to Cuttack in answer to a heart-rending appeal from Madhu Sudan Das, a highly-educated man, though belonging to the ancient and separate Uriya race, which understands no human tongue but its own, and whose script looks like a wire netting of circular loops. He called himself a Christian also, and his faith was founded simply upon Christ's own prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "The man who could utter that prayer while dying under torture was divine," he often said to me.

His unlimited generosity and a passionate sympathy with his own people had gained for himself some of sanctity's privileges during his own lifetime. I have seen a man suffering from a frightful running sore entreat him for the loan of the eighth part of a penny that he might touch the sore with it and be healed. Another came with a brass bowl imploring Madhu Sudan Das to dip his finger into the water that his wife might be delivered from her dangerous labour, and the moment he dipped his finger in, the child was safely born.

After a brief delay in Calcutta, I entered my next scene, upon the vast and placid rivers of Eastern Bengal, where flow the sacred waters of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, fed by the snows on both sides of the Himalayas, and at last united after a beneficent course of a thousand miles. Separate or united they form the highways of that flat, malarious, and fertile land, equally productive of rice and of jute—jute the commercial and deadly rival of the people's food. I have never known such unmitigated peace as in my journeyings up and down these enormous rivers, while I sat upon a little steamer's deck, sometimes passing a square-sailed junk, sometimes a long black boat with pointed prow and stern pitched high in air; sometimes seeing only the mangoes and palm-trees on the banks, and again the women washing themselves, their babies, and their brazen pots, or the men

driving gigantic perch into nets by the help of tame otters, held captive in long leashes. The only interruptions to peace were the bands of beautiful figures in white or yellow robes who came down to the landing-places to cry their "Bande Mataram" and cheer me as I passed. For the news of my coming had been conveyed from Calcutta to the so-called "seditious" centre at Barisal, and thence throughout the widespread land, and no Englishman who expresses sympathy with Indians in their own country can avoid such welcomes. Torchlight processions also came at night, and sometimes conducted me to and from vast meetings arranged for me to address.

For, peaceful as was the outward scene, Eastern Bengal was the central cause of that "unrest" which in those years kept the Indian people uneasily stirring, like those who are awakened from sleep by ominous dreams. More than two years earlier (July 19, 1905), as I said, Lord Curzon had proclaimed the Partition of Bengal, creating "Eastern Bengal and Assam" into a new and separate province with a population of 31,000,000 and a capital at the mouldering Mohammedan city of Dacca, while Calcutta remained the capital of "Bengal," with a population of 18,000,000, or of about 54,000,000 including the outlying districts of Behar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa. Lord Curzon acted as usual in the name of "efficiency," but he could not have anticipated the devastating storm that his efficiency raised. Hundreds of protest meetings were held. Large numbers of long petitions were dispatched to him and to the Home Government. Less than a month after the Proclamation, a great meeting in Calcutta took the Swadeshi oath drawn up by Surendra Nath Banerjea, Principal of Ripon College and Editor of the leading Indian paper, the *Bengali*, in these terms :

"I hereby pledge myself to abstain from the purchase of all English-made goods for at least one year from this date. So help me God."

On October 16, 1905, the Partition became what John Morley, in an evil moment, called "a settled fact," and the anniversary of that day was observed throughout India as a solemn fast. Anglo-Indians sneered at the movement as "mere sentiment," and when English people talk of "sentiment" they always mean an emotion that does not bring in sixpence. But when it was found that the Swadeshi boycott on "Liverpool salt," "Manchester cotton," and other British goods actually deprived our countrymen of many sixpences; when it was found that even the prostitutes in Eastern Bengal "went Swadeshi" and displayed their charms only in home-spun muslins; when a child asked its mother whether a mosquito was English or Swadeshi, and hearing it was Swadeshi, cried, "Then I will not kill it"—then Anglo-Indian indignation grew, and violent attempts were made to break the boycott and force the accustomed products upon an obstinate people. At the same time bodies of volunteers were organised among the Indian youth to preach Swadeshi, check or destroy the imported goods, and, in one branch calling itself "Little Brothers of the Poor" to nurse the patients of cholera and smallpox, organise pilgrimages, and protect Hindu women when bathing in the sacred rivers against the disgusting crime of "group-rape" by Mohammedans who took the encouraging attitude of the Government towards Islam as evidence that they might treat Hindus as they pleased.

Far away up the Ganges on the other side of Calcutta, I found a Kali temple, spacious, beautiful, a home of peace, but deserted because people love blood almost as much as gods love it, and hideousness stirs to religious emotion more than beauty. This was where Ramakrishna sat for years expounding spiritual truth, and so creating the Ramakrishna or Vedantist Society whose simple monastery faces the temple across the river. In the neighbouring Vedantic school, home of that passionate and saintly Sister Nivedita, I for the first time met Moti Lal Ghose, humorist, satirist, desperate

pessimist, and incalculable force, as editor, of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* or *Amrita News*. It was named after his mother's village of Amrita, a characteristic Indian word meaning both nectar and poison ; for in Indian names, as in Indian gods, opposites often coalesce. His wit gave that strange and isolated figure his influence, for the Bengalis love wit, especially as satire. He was already growing old, but though, when I asked him if he were coming with me to the Congress at Surat, he replied, " No, I cannot afford to die," he did come and has since died, after many years.

Far different in nature, and far steadier in influence, was Surendra Nath Banerjea, who as editor of the *Bengali* almost dominated Calcutta on the Indian side. He had once served as an Indian civilian, then as President of the Ripon College for Hindu boys, and now was the leading editor. But it was eloquence that gave him power. He was a born orator, for choice using the English language. Except for Mr. Gladstone, I have heard no speaker use the grand and rhetorical style with more assurance and success. One afternoon a crowded meeting of many thousand students and other young men was gathered in the great College Square. There they stood, white-robed, bare-headed as is the Bengali custom, and when "Bande Mataram" had been sung, Surendra Nath rose. It was not an important speech. His object was only to sketch the programme of the coming Congress, and to urge all parties to unite. But he expounded those themes with a magnificence of phrase and continuity of eloquence that held me spellbound, much as I detest rhetoric. Sentence answered to sentence, period to period, thunder to thunder. There was no hesitation, no throwing back, no wandering around for ideas or words, nothing to remind one of a Member of Parliament at a flower show. Out the great language rolled without a break or a drop, each syllable in its exact place and order, each sentence following a cadence of its own, so inevitably that one could foretell its rise and fall, like the movement of rolling billows on a calm

sea. I suppose Cicero's oratory sounded like that. After him I spoke and the meeting ended.

It was unfortunate that for the following morning Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, had invited me out to the beautiful Residency of Belvidere, where I enjoyed breakfast together with the unexpected advantage of family prayers. All went well, as again reporters say, till the moment of collision—all went well between us till the morning papers appeared, the Indian papers praising my sympathetic words, the Anglo-Indian papers pouring out upon me the customary abuse, perhaps kept always in type for such occasions. The Lieutenant-Governor was not pleased, and he must have been still more annoyed when he heard from the Government spies that I had spent a great part of the previous night in converse with Arabinda Ghose, the wisest and most attractive of the Extremist leaders.

Arabinda had been brought up in England, and complained that he could not speak Bengali well enough to get to the hearts of his own people. After St. Paul's School and Cambridge, he had passed first for the Indian Civil, but was disqualified on riding. For a time he had served the progressive Gaekwar of Baroda, and now was undoubtedly the real editor of the Extremist paper, the *Bande Mataram*, but still remained at large, partly owing to the number of "prison editors" on his staff. He seemed under thirty. Intent eyes looked from his thin and clear-cut face, with a gravity that seemed immovable. Silence and gravity were his characteristics, and his deepest interest lay in religion or philosophy rather than in politics, as he afterwards showed by retiring to meditation in French Pondicherry, where he was visited by young Indians who listened to his words as to apostolic utterances almost divine. Even when I knew him I could describe him as possessed by that concentrated vision, the limited and absorbing devotion that mark the religious soul.

To him Nationalism was indeed a religion, surrounded by

a mist of glory, like the halo that mediæval saints beheld gleaming around the Holy Grail. He cared nothing whatever for political reforms or attempts to unite British and Indian in common prosperity. The worse the Government was, the better for the Nationalist cause. The Partition of Bengal was the greatest blessing that had ever happened for India. No other measure could have stirred Indian feeling so deeply, or helped so well to rouse the people from the lethargy of previous years, when, as he told me, "each generation had reduced Indians more and more to the condition of sheep and fatted calves." Such was the man to whom I was naturally most attracted—the man who inspired official circles with the greatest alarm, because his influence, though least spoken of, was most profound.

Many strange and beautiful sights I saw, and much of deep interest I heard, as I wandered about that strange and beautiful country, clinging to this old world as one lacking any sure and certain hope of a better. In Benares I saw Mrs. Annie Besant one day at dawn, finding her in some outpost of her Hindu College, seated cross-legged on a white platform, and dressed in a white silk costume, bordered with scarlet and gold. She looked much the same as when I used to hear her twenty-five years before denying the possibility of God on the same platform with Charles Bradlaugh in Old Street or City Road. But she was finer now, white-haired, and very dignified. She spoke to me mainly on the College and practical politics, in which she then favoured the Moderate Party of Gokhale and Lajpat Raj, as indeed, with occasional lapses she continued to do. I found that her Brahman Guru (to whom she made profound obeisance when he entered) honoured her highly for her practical powers, but considered that, having a merely Western mind, she could not rise to the heights or penetrate the depths of Indian philosophy ; and I suspect that is true of any mind that demands in philosophy some glimmering of reason.

CHAPTER XX

THE "DAILY NEWS"

ON RETURNING from India in the spring of 1908, I found myself out of work except for my weekly articles for the *Nation*, but very busily occupied, as I usually have been, when out of work. I was speaking a good deal on India, besides writing my book called *The New Spirit in India*. Once I spoke upon the subject side by side with Keir Hardie, and any contact with that great-hearted man is always a delight to remember, so fearless and honourable he was. I was writing and speaking also in hope of averting the proposed visit of King Edward to the Tsar—a visit obviously tending to a "Triple Entente," which, as we know now, might just as well have been called an alliance. I was deeply engaged in the agitation for Woman Suffrage, and all the time I never ceased to denounce the Angola slavery and the cocoa planters of San Thomé. All these highly unpopular and controversial interests gave me plenty to do, but nothing to live upon, and my daughter was studying music in Milan, my son was learning to draw at the Slade School.

Since the previous autumn, A. G. Gardiner, the distinguished editor of the *Daily News*, had been meditating an invitation to me as leader-writer and war correspondent; but his meditations were crossed by natural scruples, and both by nature and Nonconformity he was a scrupulous man. His paper was rightly regarded as the organ of advanced Liberalism in London, and in a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* before I went to India I had publicly renounced membership of the Liberal Party, in rage at their

gradual approach to an understanding with the bloodthirsty Tsardom. What was worse, he knew I should never abandon my contest against the cocoa slavery, and the Cadburys, the chief proprietors of the paper, still deemed it inadvisable to declare the boycott which I called for against Angola cocoa. Almost equally objectionable was my support of the Militant Suffragettes, of whom his paper, with its Quakerish tinge of amiable passivity, could not approve. But worst of all was his fear of Brailsford, then his chief leader-writer. In him he recognised, as I had always recognised, a writer of power not to be surpassed on the subjects which he made his own. These subjects were much the same as mine—Russia, the Near East, and foreign affairs in general, though Brailsford's knowledge was far more intimate and ready-to-hand. So Gardiner considered both of us insufficiently interested in all that vital branch of affairs roughly classified as "the parish pump." In a moment of gracious compliance, I offered to make a special study of the pump-handle or some other section. But he then admitted that his real fear was the combination of Brailsford and myself as his two leader-writers. In Brailsford he had found a "demoniacal persistence" in working towards his own aim by flanking movements, combined with a cleverness that precluded the editorial amenities of toning-down. I agreed that, like all good writing, Brailsford's was so close-woven that a single slit would ruin the whole piece ; but I found that Gardiner still feared both of us as being so difficult and rebellious that if we ran in harness, Heaven knew what might happen to the coach. "What a pair to drive tandem !" Ernest Parke, then editor of the *Star*, had said to him. And though I observed that I, whose hair lay flat as Lord Curzon's, was a sucking dove compared with Brailsford, whose hair stood on end with rebellious spirit, Gardiner still hesitated for many weeks ; his hesitation being increased by Brailsford's announcement that, unless the paper were thrown open to discussion of the Angola slavery, he would leave it.

That point was at last conceded by the proprietors, and when Charles Masterman, who had been doing leaders, was elevated to be Under-Secretary to the Local Government Board under John Burns in June 1908, Gardiner made me the definite offer of four leaders a week at £500 a year, with option of special work on special terms for wars and other big events at home or abroad, the only condition being that he should submit to the proprietors anything I wished to insert in the paper on the Angola slavery. I accepted that condition, knowing that they would soon agree to a boycott on the San Thomé cocoa. In fact, they declared it a few months later, and I was able to acclaim their decision in terms of eulogy, as described in a previous chapter.

Before taking up the regular work, I finished my book on India, going for peace to Dolgelley, always so beautiful a region to me. Just to show how rash it is to judge a man from any single meeting, though I am always doing it, I extract a few sentences from a diary of two successive days :

“July 13 : Cycled to Llanbedr to see the Leonard Hobhouses. As I went past Dyffryn, looking over a blue sea to the distant promontory that stretches out to Bardsey, I had a sudden vision of joy—all the splendid joy that has come to me in life. It will soon end, but I rejoiced to have had it, and I thanked all the pairs of lovers who had handed it on to me, from the apes downward.

“July 14 : I chewed sweltered venom all day. Hideous plots and hatred and negligence combined deliberately conduce to my ruin. Massingham wrote asking for a middle on Milton, but I refused till next week, having no books here. Was hardly sane all day with irritation and rage. Wilfrid Blunt sent a cheque of £50 for the rescue of Spiridonova from Siberia. Others wrote but I did not open their letters. Cycled in rain up the Dinas Mawddy pass, and sat long in the Cross Foxes, writing a savage and hateful letter. Strange how everything has crumbled since I was here.”

What had happened to make such a change in a single night? Rain had come in place of sun, it is true, and I suspect that a letter I longed for had not arrived. Or was it that Hobhouse had given me Tolstoy's tremendous pamphlet, "I cannot be Silent." Nothing else had happened, but how immeasurable was the difference! It would be absurd to judge me as the same man on those two successive days. Yet that very day I did receive a letter which surely might have distracted my thoughts from disappointed affection, from rain, and even from the Tsar. It came from a poet with hair of burnished copper (no connection with henna dye, which my acquaintance with Tartars had taught me easily to detect). I had seen her only once, and had written envying her youth and admiring her verse, which seemed to me like fine enamel set with jewels, but rather remote and obscure for my daylight and definite realism. She answered repudiating the crown of youth with passionate reluctance:

"I sojourn now in those years of infinite regret during which a woman slowly relinquishes all that is dearest to her. . . . It was indeed strange that you should write to me that all life lay before me just at the time when I most keenly realised that youth has gone, that the one thing desirable was for ever denied me, that existence henceforth must be a kind of secret sacrifice—at a time when I contemplated my story as a desperate ironical comedy in which the maddest idealist that ever lived is defeated and mocked by nature in exquisitely bitter revenge. . . . Jewels, you say! . . . Through a childhood of poverty, through a youth of diverse suffering, something clear and cold and hard remained unmolten in me, some steadfast preoccupation with remote, glittering, absolute things, which kept me a little apart from humanity. But for the last three weeks I have journeyed in a strange Valley of Humiliation. A knife at my breast has cut from the quivering nerves all the jewelled part of me. . . .

"When the subject matter is extremely vivid to one's

personality, I suppose there is really more danger of obscurity than at other times. Besides, I know some of the verses try to say things so confused and inarticulate that they must fail miserably. . . . You could not have written such verse and prose unless you possessed certain superb personal qualities. Sometimes, I know, the art of a writer has nothing to do with his personality ; but yours is manifestly yourself. . . . Time is merciful to men. He is so occupied with the women in his torture-chamber that he leaves men alone. . . . But do you not waste much of your magnificent energy on trivial things ? It is time to lay great compulsion on yourself, and to choose more severely, and perhaps more nobly. It is time to stop wasting time, and to follow the high Quest to its end, disregarding even the cries of distressed ladies by the way. O Dweller on the Lonely Mountain, make more strong and lovely verse, and shape more stories from the terrible conflicts of the soul."

One would have thought there was enough in that letter to soothe and flatter—to distract from selfish woes at any rate. Yet even after reading it I could only write—"Rage possessed me !"

So I went back to leader-writing on the *Daily News*. Difficulty arose when the paper began publishing in Manchester simultaneously with the London edition, and our leaders had to be telegraphed up in time for the North of England's breakfast. That was in January 1909, and as leader-writer I had to come to the office at 7.30 and begin writing at once, instead of enjoying dinner, waiting about quietly till 10 or 10.30, and saying "Good morning" to everyone as I went home in the tram at 2 a.m. The consequence was that when, on January 22, Sir Edward Grey made a great speech at Coldstream, I had to guess what he was likely to say and to write my approval or criticism of it before a word of the tape or "flimsy" (telegraphic report) on the speech had come through. Happily I guessed right,

but what if I had guessed wrong? Or what if he had said something? Under the strain of this repeated anxiety, my body broke down, and had to be recovered by a brief sojourn in my beloved Sallanches and in Chamounix, where, accompanied by my son Richard and by Joe Clayton, a man of unusually fine temperament and much vital knowledge, I found great joy in the winter mountains, and some in the winter sports, especially at that amazing moment when the skis began to glide under me, and I to glide on top of them for a considerable distance.

With my editor on the daily, I enjoyed a few differences of opinion; what working people call "discrepancies" when they have been violently run in by the police. But at heart he was a temperate and conciliatory editor, whose agitation during a discrepancy revealed his pacific temperament. Though not supreme like Massingham, A. G. Gardiner was an excellent editor, working with knowledge, and following the straight path of honesty and definite principle to the utmost of his position's limits, though often shaken in that position before he fell, many years later, to the loss of all true journalism. I have intimately known and worked for four great Liberal editors—Massingham, Gardiner, Robert Donald, and J. A. Spender, and all four within the space of a year or two were afterwards driven from their chairs into the wilderness, where their peculiarly rare and valuable power was left to rot uneasily.

But, excellent as an editor, Gardiner, I thought, had really more distinction as a writer. His insight into living character was remarkable. A few years before the War he eulogised the Kaiser for praiseworthy qualities which have since escaped notice, and his descriptive portraits were works of art, excelling in the satiric or malicious touch—an unexpected gift in so gentle and considerate a nature. Indeed, he possessed a very unusual power of descriptive writing, and if I had controlled the arrangement of the Staff in those days, I should have given the editorship to Edmund Bentley,

author of *Trent's Last Case*, and an excellent journalist as well, afterwards transferred to the *Daily Telegraph* ; I should have kept Brailsford, of course, as leader-writer on foreign affairs ; have raked the Fabian Society with a tooth-comb for a fairly human writer on home affairs ; have made Wilson Harris " Our Diplomatic Correspondent," because he has the art of eliciting secrets as one elicits a wrinkle with a pin and keeps it to oneself. I should have sent myself to all the troubles of the round world in succession, and made Gardiner " Our Parliamentary Correspondent " for " the sketch," with a special retainer for all boxing competitions, prize fights, and other popular forms of sport. Well do I remember those thrilling columns that he wrote on one of the great boxing matches, which lasted, I think, exactly six seconds. I subsequently described him in the *Nation* as " A.G.G., the pugilistic expert of the *Daily News*," and to my surprise, he resented the description. But why ? What expert could have made more of such a scene ?

During those fourteen months on the *Daily News* I became acquainted with many persons of distinction, and with some of them I formed a more intimate friendship. Not for the first time, nor, happily, for the last, I frequently met Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton. I don't know why they are always bracketed together, for they differ widely in temperament, though their principles and aims seem much the same. To me they illustrated the meaning and power of the Queen Anne " Wits," but I preferred to picture them as two stalwart countrymen seated on a bench beside their beer, while over their rollicking heads creaked the sign of " The Jolly Christian." Mr. Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, I met (unfortunately as it turned out afterwards) at a dinner given by Massingham, who then regarded him with a hopeful admiration much modified in later years. At that meeting, as on all subsequent occasions but two, he tried to make me realise the power of that " Celtic charm" to which he trusted so confidently. He also astonished me by

his depreciation of personal courage, which he said could always be purchased at 1s. 3d. a day, whereas I thought of courage, not indeed as a virtue, but as the rare and only foundation of all virtues. When I returned from India, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt sent for me, and in his Diaries he has recorded that on entering I looked so grave he thought I had come with hostile intent. Far otherwise ! My natural shyness made me grave at finding myself in the presence of that redoubtable old figure, so democratic a champion of freedom, so despotic an aristocrat at heart, so fine a breeder of horses, and so unusual a poet.

E. D. Morel I began to know at that time, and proud indeed I was to be present at the banquet we gave to celebrate the success of his stupendous work for the deliverance of the Congo natives from cruel exploitation—elevated, too, above pride when St. Loe Strachey in his *Spectator* coupled me with Morel as one of the two "Knights-errant" of the time. And J. L. Garvin I then began to know, and have since met too rarely, though always with peculiar delight ; for he is like a high-tempered colt—eyes, mind, pen, and tongue always going full gallop, and in any direction so long as the pace is rapid, but in the end quite sure to come forward along the fine and ennobling course. And "Robbie" Ross I met again, most endearing of men, so polite, so appreciative, and so modest. To him also we gave a banquet, to celebrate the completion of his arduous and then evilly-regarded labour on behalf of Oscar Wilde's memory and genius. He broke down with emotion in his thanks ; but what I remember most vividly was the speech of Frank Harris, who sat near me, groaning and growling through the other speeches, though the speakers were famous and good, but rising at the end with such a speech as seemed to wipe out every previous word with the grandeur of its praise. Old John Clifford, too, I met, hoary defender of the Liberal faith, and his disciple, Silvester Horne, too soon to be rapt away. In the chapels of both, as in Trafalgar Square and wherever

else a platform offered, I spoke against the despotism of the Tsar, and the shame of our proposed alliance.

But with two men, whom I had known slightly before those days, acquaintance then began to grow into friendship. John Galsworthy I think I must have met first at a *Nation* lunch, for he wrote occasionally in the *Nation*; and Massingham was enthusiastic in admiration. I do not know how Galsworthy came to read my work, dealing with such different spheres and interests from his own, and so I was all the more exhilarated when he wrote in the highest praise of my books on Angola (*A Modern Slavery*), on Russia (*The Dawn in Russia*), and on India (*The New Spirit in India*). Though strangely incapable of novel-reading, I eagerly read all his novels and essays as they came out, and went to all his plays. Ignorant of fictitious women as I always have been, I sometimes had the impertinence to criticise the women in both novels and plays. Mrs. Pendyce rejoices everyone, but some of the other women—what dumb dogs they are ! How weak, how incapable of showing fight for life or for love ! Irene collapses ; Mrs. Bellew exhibits just one touch of vulgarity ; the woman in *Justice* makes an answer at the trial which no woman could have made ; the woman in *Strife* urges her lover to surrender, which women in strikes hardly ever do ; the woman in *The Fugitive* helplessly drifts into that last poignant scene, one of the most heart-rending in all drama. It is rather strange that a writer so sympathetic with women, himself possessing so much of the finest feminine nature, should so seldom have created a woman of the finest type.

But never mind ! With what delight I still re-read all the great series of his books but two ! What wealth of thought and workmanship is there compact ! What insight into the nature of the most divergent men ! What a picture of our upper-middle class as once we knew it and have seen it fading before our eyes ! Sombre the books usually are, and full of pity for mankind, as for those other kinds of animals

falsely called dumb. I have often thought that, after the usual upbringing in the comfortable and sporting habits of wealthy professional classes, the weight of all this world's misery fell upon Galsworthy too suddenly and too late ; not gradually and in early life as it falls upon most of us. The horror of it seems almost to have overwhelmed him, just as the horror of a slaughter-house might overwhelm a daintily carnivorous woman if she once caught sight of it. I have thought one might detect that excess of pity (if pity may be in excess) lurking in the shy tenderness of those blue-grey eyes under the thoughtful dome of the head—eyes that seem to contradict the strong lines of the face and chin, and the quiet but decisive utterance such as comes naturally from the offspring of a self-confident and well-fed stock, invariably well dressed.

And then came John Masefield. What a man he was and is ! That little head with its flat and dreaming, light-brown eyes, rather sad, and pitiful for all the world ; the small and rather delicate face ; the deep and rather melancholy voice uttering genuine English with singular exactness of word and phrase ; the tall and athletic but slender figure ; the punctilious politeness of manner, so sensitively careful of other people's feelings that other people are startled as at something rare and strange—how were such qualities of mind and body incarnate in the former associate of jolly Jack-tars sailing the South American seas, or of pot-washers in the saloon bars of New York, or of carpet-weavers at Yonkers on the Hudson ? Except for dexterity of hand, and a passionate knowledge of old ships and rigging, what trace of those varied and adventurous days is obvious in the imaginative poet who can, as in *The Widow in the Bye-Street*, create scenes so poignant that I cannot endure the torture of their sorrow ; scenes so exhilarating as in *Reynard the Fox* that in English country houses poetry is again read for the first time in two hundred years ; and emotions so profound in thought, as in *Lollingdon Sonnets*, that one may brood over each for a day and a night and not exhaust

it? Add to all this a minute and admiring knowledge of all that is finest in the splendid line of English literature, and a critical faculty that reveals new splendour on the march and hardly ever goes astray.

Of the many remarkable women whom I met in those years, I may now mention only two. One was Halidé, the Turk, married at that time to one of the Positivist Young Turks, whose revolution had ended the tyranny of Abdul Hamid in the summer of 1908. In England we gave her the husband's name as Mme Salih, but Halidé was and remains her Turkish name, though she has married again. To London she came pleading the cause of the Young Turk movement as a genuinely national rising against cruelty and corruption. I only wish the Young Turks had "left it at that," as the lawyers say, instead of attempting to "Ottomanise" or exterminate the subject Christian races with a violence equal to Abdul's own. I was invited to meet her at Miss Isabel Fry's, and there I listened to her for a long time alone. Perhaps I should remember more of her political sentiments if she had not been so amazingly beautiful that I felt like Byron closeted with a Light of the Harem. "A most exquisite being," I wrote in my diary, "with long soft eyes like a doe's, tiny, curled upper lip, a long thin nose and plaits of dark hair flushed with copper, like henna; the whole figure slight and graceful. Very *troublante* she was, and when we were left alone there was just a shade of embarrassment on my side, perhaps on both sides. But she resumed a serious conversation, speaking about the Young Turks with great power and feeling. Who would have supposed that the lovely figure, wrapt in cream-coloured Oriental silks, and all so exquisite and flower-like, was to be the woman who has done most to set Turkish women free from the veil and all the other amorous restrictions of Seraglio Point? Or that she was to serve with the Turkish armies through the Great War, and after the War to ride with the Turkish armies that chased the invading Greeks from the midst of Asia Minor down to

the sea at Smyrna, where she attempted, however vainly, to save the wretched Greek population from massacre on the quays?

The other woman, standing in apparent contrast, endowed with an equally courageous heart, was Alice Stopford Green, historian and historian's widow. When first I began to know her, she was living in Westminster overlooking the river, and at her dinners and receptions I found gathered various persons of distinction—statesmen of both parties, like Mr. Arthur Balfour, Sir Antony MacDonnell, and Mr. Augustine Birrell; champions of human freedom like E. D. Morel; writers, especially young Irish writers, like Padraic Colum and Robert Lynd. There she sat in our midst, queenly, Elizabethan, already white-haired and ageing, though still, happily, to live so many years; dominating us all by knowledge, wit, and courteous encouragement to shy people like myself; but at heart remaining very simple, and, above all, very humorous. She often reminded me of the famous women who used to pull the strings of State a hundred years ago, and undoubtedly she enjoyed her position and her power. All the greater honour was due to her when, in the middle of the Great War, she quietly left that scene of influence and authority and withdrew to her own land to watch from St. Stephen's Green, giving her aid in the troubled course of Irish history, exposed to every danger, harried and raided by Black-and-Tans and the ex-officers and ex-gentlemen known as "Auxiliaries," her house repeatedly searched, her books, documents, and historical manuscripts carted about in Army lorries, lost, confused, or hurled back to her door with every discourtesy. Yet whenever I met her in Dublin throughout those terrible years, I found her retaining the good sense, the humour, and the irrepressible gaiety which I had known in Westminster at the height of her social power.

But fine as she always was, she rose to an unimagined greatness when we sat together, with Gertrude Bannister and

a few others, on the night before the English Government hanged my friend, Roger Casement (August 3, 1916). We had done all that men and women could do ; but as all had been in vain, we sat with Mrs. Green through the night, and while he in his cell was watching for the dawn of his death, she continued to speak to us of life and of death with a courage and a wisdom beyond all that I have known. It was as though we were listening to the discourse of Socrates in the hours before his own execution. So profoundly wise she was, so cheerful and so humorous through it all.

What with the *Nation* and the publication of my *Essays in Freedom* besides, I was fairly rich during my service to the *Daily News*. For I must have made about £800 in the fourteen months, and so I was able almost every Saturday to wander far through the southern counties, especially Bucks, Berks, Sussex and Hants, partly for mere pleasure in those beautiful scenes, partly to reassure myself how little concern the wide world has for Fleet Street. Wallowing in such wealth I was also able to go, in July 1909, for another fortnight to France, cycling from Rousseau's Chambéry to trace Hannibal's probable route into Italy over the Little St. Bernard, and so round by Albertville, Annecy, and the pass through Megève to my beautiful Sallanches again. But those simple and natural delights were ending for me. It was a time of growing danger. The Young Turk revolution, Austria's seizure of Bosnia-Herzegovina, her trouble with Serbia and Montenegro, the apparition of the Kaiser "in shining armour," the clamour of the British crowd for more Dreadnoughts and more again—all those ominous signals kept me disquieted, like the rest of this country and Europe. In June (1909) at an Imperial Press banquet in the White City, Lord Rosebery made a remarkable speech :

"It was finely delivered," I wrote, "and with great personal attraction, though sometimes he raised his arms high above his head and waved them about, and though I

see in him always the Eton boy with broad white collar and short jacket. It was exactly the speech for the audience, and first one sentence was cheered and then another, according to the political sentiments of the several tables allotted to the papers. But it contained only one great sentence—about the danger of wars ‘rattling us into barbarism,’ unless the time comes when the working people will rise and cry, ‘let this madness and foolery stop!’”

The working people did not rise, and into barbarism the rulers of Europe continued to rattle us. But it was not to war in the Near East, as I had expected, that I was next despatched. Hardly had I returned from France, and taken part with Keir Hardie, Hyndman, Bernard Shaw, Cunningham Graham, Ramsay MacDonald, and others in a great Trafalgar Square meeting to protest against the proposed visit of the Tsar to England (strange to say it was a successful protest, for it was thought best to limit the Tsar’s visit to a short walk in the Isle of Wight)—hardly was that over when I was ordered to Spain owing to a revolutionary outbreak in Barcelona.

All the railways to that city had been cut, and the steamers had ceased to call. But at Marseilles I found a tiny boat venturing to the port with a cargo of eggs—rather explosive eggs, but thought suitable for revolutionists. Hidden among them, I arrived at the quay, and on emerging beheld the whole beautiful city, which I had known eleven years before, now covered with thick smoke pouring from the fiery ruins of thirty-seven monasteries, convents, and churches. The streets were barricaded with paving stones; wild shooting continued; nearly all factories were closed; the sinister fortress of Montjuich was crowded with prisoners. As usual various passions caused the revolution—angry refusal to serve in the Moroccan war; the Catalans’ ancient hatred of Castile; and the eternal negative of the poor, who were sick of a haricot diet and wanted meat and

soup more than once a week. The revolution collapsed as the flames died down, and soon nothing was left of it. So I was ordered to Madrid, and thence to Melilla in Morocco, where the unhappy Spaniards were conducting their customary wars against the Moors of the Rif, with their customary deliberation.

It was not a popular war with the Spanish conscripts, nor had I much pleasure in it. On the whole it was the most futile and disagreeable campaign I have shared. The only covert I could find in the crowded and filthy little town was a black hole without window, and entered from a passage so thick with stink one could hardly move along it. That black hole swarmed with mosquitoes, and out of doors the air either dripped with damp heat or was obscured with a fog of white dust, so blinding that one sentry could not see the next at five yards interval till the wind died down. The Spanish censor lived in the fort at the top of the town, and was always asleep or enjoying himself elsewhere. The Spanish Army made only two signs of activity. Every morning and evening a field battery just beyond my black hole discharged several shells into the side of Mount Gurugu at about 6,000 yards, and always succeeded in striking the mountain, which runs up to two peaks of about 3,000 to 4,000 feet. To hit the mountain must have been the ostensible object, for nothing living was ever visible ; but perhaps the true object was the joy of being photographed for the Madrid papers, which usually published fine pictures of " Our Guns in Action " a few days later. Ladies of the town also liked to climb up and watch the firing, but they generally chose the cool of evening when sweat would not wash their powder off.

The other activity was the progress of a supply column with a convoy of guards to the furthest Spanish outpost about five miles south along the coast of the promontory. This convoy went every day, the supplies running in trucks along the little line of the French concession. As the engine crept slowly so as to allow the infantry to keep up with it, I

generally marched beside it or rode a baker's horse, just for something to do. So we proceeded daily for about five miles to the outpost at the end of the Mar Chica or Little Sea, a long lagoon cut off by sandbanks from the open. There was an attempt at one time to cut a channel through the sandbank so as to allow the supplies to be brought up by water, and I watched the digging till a trickle actually began to run through. But the attempt was then abandoned, and the diggers sat on the bank contemplating their lost labour in the Spanish manner. Yet such a channel would have saved lives, for the supply column slowly moving along its daily course was exposed nearly all the way to snipers on the right flank. Through glasses I could see the white-robed, white-turbaned Moors gathering in little groups outside their brown stone huts in the gullies, and creeping down among the rocks till within easy range. Then the bullets would begin to shriek around us, and every day one or two wretched conscripts were killed, and six or seven wounded, all for the benefit of speculative *concessionaires* in Paris and Madrid. From the last Spanish outpost one could see the walled town of Zeluan, eight or ten miles away across a strip of plain. That was to be the first objective of the war, and I thought a determined dash with cavalry and guns might perhaps have won it in two hours, though with loss. But the Spanish Army had no heart in the business. It ate and drank quicker than it moved, and though Zeluan was ultimately reached, my editor had recalled me in despair some weeks before.

CHAPTER XXI

"VOTES FOR WOMEN"

IN SPITE OF MY ESTEEM for the editor, my position on the *Daily News* had often been troubled and uncertain, but on returning from Morocco I had no idea how near the end had come. To understand what followed, a summary of my relations to the militant Suffrage Movement must suffice. For the agitation itself lasted thirteen years, and I was closely in touch with it nearly all that time, whenever I was in England.

It was in Moscow that I first began to pay serious attention to the question, for whilst there I heard that Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence had been arrested and imprisoned for two months after making a disturbance in the outer lobby of the House of Commons (October 1906), I had probably read, just a year before (October 15, 1905), that, while Sir Edward Grey was speaking in Manchester, two unknown young women, Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney had created some turmoil by raising the cry of "Votes for Women," soon to become so ominous. But, being a mere Liberal at the time, I took little notice of the affair. I supposed that a question which had jogged off and on for forty years as a pious resolution might be left to jog for another forty, like the other questions which are always agreed to "by acclamation" at Party meetings and are led back to the stable till the day for annual exercise returns. But when women I knew—women whom everyone respected, like Cobden's daughter and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence—took to rioting and were sent to prison, it set me thinking.

If I write especially of the W.S.P.U., of course I do not

forget the other Suffrage Societies—the National Union, founded in 1897, and for many years gallantly led by Millicent Fawcett, herself so persistent, so reasonable, and so humorous, large-minded enough to appreciate the service of the “Militants” whose methods she deplored; the Women’s Freedom League, an offshoot from the W.S.P.U. (1907) and boasting a democratic constitution but mainly directed by Mrs. Despard, a notable figure in appearance and zeal, already veteran in service to the poor of London, and so militant by nature, even when ingeminating love, that on seeing her at the head of her League’s processions, I was always reminded of “The Fighting Téméraire.” There were many other societies, too—the Church League, the Women Writers’ League, the Tax-Resisters’ League, the Men’s League, of which I was for many years a member, and the Men’s Political Union, of which I was chairman. Early in 1914 some of us also formed the United Suffragists, and by some of its members the work was carried on with superb courage in the face of extreme difficulty throughout the Great War up to the triumph of February 1918.

The enormous influence of the W.S.P.U. was mainly due to the splendour of the cause, and the call upon women to sacrifice themselves to it. But to those essentials in every conflict must be added the remarkable and diverse qualities of the four leaders. Sometimes we got a little tired of talk about “Our Great Leaders,” but they well deserved the term. Emmeline Pankhurst possessed above all the indefinable gift of “personality.” The record of her life was written upon her face in the lines of patience, resolution, and courage. In speaking, her voice could move an immense audience by its quiet passion and subdued pathos, never approaching the sentimental, which always lay so dangerously close to the women’s demand. I once wrote of her, as she led one of those violently opposed “deputations” to the House of Commons, she had on her face a look that I should not care to see on the face of my enemy. But it was

not a savage or vindictive look. The face on the whole was gentle, but resolution and a burning sense of injustice made it formidable. Perhaps the sense of injustice was the dominant impulse in herself and most of her followers—that injustice which to English natures is intolerable, the injustice of unreason and broken promise, the injustice of such trickery as was practised by Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George when, after two definite promises to give effect, “in the letter and in the spirit,” to the arrangement of facilities for the Conciliation Bill, the Bill, as Mr. Lloyd George boasted, was “torpedoed” on the pretence of further extension (November 1911).

At her side stood her three daughters—Christabel, Sylvia, and Adela—young women all of exceptional but different capacities. Perhaps I should say that Christabel stood in front of her rather than at her side. For it always seemed to me that Christabel was the darling of her heart, and to save her from risk she was always ready to expose herself to any suffering. At all events it was Christabel who stood in front of “The Movement,” and though women’s political emancipation owes an incalculable debt to many heroic women of that time, I think that, on the whole, it owes most to her. When she suddenly appeared in the leading rank, she was just under thirty, in face and form a figure of unusually attractive power. Brown hair, inclined to wave in curls; a rosy, broad and open face that always seemed to welcome friends and foes with a smile; blue-grey eyes rather turned up at the outer ends, which, together with rather high cheekbones, gave her a Chinese look; rather long and supple mouth, made for eloquence; and a head that turned easily upon a slender stalk of neck. The figure was not very tall, but slight and lissome as a young leopard’s; so agile in movement and gesture that when Massingham (no friend to the Militants at that time) first heard her as she confronted a vast and mainly hostile audience in Hyde Park, he said to me, “See her from whatever point you will, she is invariably

graceful." The hands were very remarkable—small, light, and very expressive. When, in the midst of a speech, she used them in a favourite gesture, holding them out in front of her and just clapping them together almost inaudibly, one felt that at each stroke she drove a nail into the coffin of some opponent's political reputation, as in fact she usually did. Even in the most violent and unpopular days of "The Movement," her influence over a hostile crowd was almost irresistible. When one was doing one's poor best to speak against the tumult, it was disconcerting to hear the repeated chant go up : "We want Chrissie ! We want Chrissie !" But I always recognised that it was natural. Her smiling "sonsie" face, her youthful elegance, her rapid wit and vehement repartees played more than music's charm upon the savage breast. And when the stormiest meeting was over, when she had thrown into her speeches and answers a wealth of vitality that I have never seen surpassed, she would coil up in the corner of a railway carriage like a graceful kitten and go to sleep without another word.

In stating the broad principles and aims of "The Movement," she was not her mother's equal. She had not the pathetic or moving powers of her mother or of Evelyn Sharp, nor the quiet wisdom of Lady Constance Lytton. She had no more sense for abstract ideas and doctrines than I have. What she loved was the political tactics, the conflict with realities, with the tricks of statesmen and the evasions of party interest. In active conflict she was supreme. Her scent for political deception was like a bloodhound's hot on the murderer's trail, and no false assurance or specious compromise took her in. Two lines of action I attribute to her especially : I think it must have been she who first saw the uselessness of appealing to private Members or trying to promote the election of "sympathisers with the women's cause." "The Private Member," I heard her say in a speech at Queen's Hall, "is a rudimentary organ, like the buttons in the middle of a tail-coat's back." Vain was the

help of such. It was the Government that must be moved. Those were the days of Liberal ascendancy, and so, when the women marched in procession, perhaps to cheer Christabel in her cell at Holloway or to demonstrate before the House of Commons, the end of one among their many songs would run : " Votes for Women ! And keep the Liberal out ! " To strike at the heart was her Napoleonic strategy, and in other ways she followed the Napoleonic maxim of war : " Never do what you know the enemy wants you to do."

Her second great service to the cause is more difficult to define. It was perhaps briefly expressed in a speech to a body of delegates from the various societies in the Albert Hall, April 29, 1909. Remembering the familiar Byronic line : " Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow," Mrs. Pankhurst had been saying, " No people enslaved ever had freedom given to them ; they always had to win it for themselves." And taking up her turn, Christabel called to the delegates : " Remember the dignity of your womanhood. Do not appeal ; do not beg ; do not grovel. Take courage, join hands, stand beside us, fight with us."¹

It was that " dignity of womanhood " which she sought to establish—not the identity, but the equality, of women with men. She could have played on men with all of the feminine arts, had she chosen ; but all those supposed advantages of sex, upon which Anti-Suffragists so confidently relied to protect themselves from wrong, she entirely rejected. Women must stand on the fair, open, and level ground, recognised as possessing their legal and constitutional position in the control of their own and their country's destiny. For that position, during the six years when her power was at its height, she fought with a skill, a resource, and courageous persistence that secured her a devotion compelling her followers in the faith to suffer all things, even death, for their cause.

¹ Quoted in *Woman's Effort*, by A. E. Metcalfe, p. 93.

Something in her nature still eludes analysis, as in all examples of strong personality. In spite of her charm and feminine attraction, there was in her soul a core hard and brilliant as steel, and I sometimes thought, as pitiless. But indeed she was possessed by that incalculable force which Goethe called “dæmonic.” She seemed to me like one of nature’s forces, driving blindly, irresistibly, and unconsciously forward. I doubt whether, with all her wits, she quite realised the vast revolution she was accomplishing. After the lamentable “split” in the W.S.P.U. during the autumn of 1912, while I was with the Bulgarian Army, all manner of things were said against her, though never by her former friends ; and sometimes I was myself tempted silently to remember Pope’s lines about the man who, too fond to rule alone, bore, like the Turk, no brother near the throne. On returning from the Bulgarian war that winter I went to see her in Paris, hoping, hoping in vain, that the breach in the party might still be restored. But pleasing and reasonable as she was, I saw my efforts were useless. Next spring her mother asked me to meet her at Charing Cross, and she urged me to abandon my endeavours to heal the quarrel and to induce Christabel to return to London ; for she would not consent to her return, and “when divorce has been decreed, it was best for the two parties never to meet.”

About the two other leaders in “The Movement” I find it more difficult to speak ; for they are still my intimate friends, and any praise from me might sound like an attempt to repay the affectionate and the life-saving generosity which they have always lavished upon me ; and for similar reasons criticism is likely to be more severe ! Both Emmeline Pethick Lawrence and Frederick Pethick Lawrence brought special qualities to leadership—just those qualities that gave added power to the quartet, and for many years made it work like one and speak with the harmony of four diverse instruments. As a matter of course Mrs. Lawrence brought

with her the inspiration of extraordinary courage. That might be said of all members in "The Movement," no matter how timid, reserved, and sensitive by nature ; for the greater the timidity, the more admirable is the courage. She also brought a remarkable gift of eloquence, and by her speeches could dominate and persuade great meetings. None of the leaders was more convincing in statement of main principles and the righteousness of the demand. Certainly none had equal power of appeal to the wealthy and respectable. She was Treasurer of the Union, and after her speeches in the Albert Hall, thousands on thousands of pounds would flow into the treasury, the sum increasing with every meeting up to the end. What gave her this peculiar faculty of extracting money from her hearers I never quite knew. To me, with an inborn detestation of rhetoric, her speeches often flew too high. As the great periods circled ever upwards like an eagles flight into the heavens, I would murmur inwardly "For the love of God, come down. Give us some of that earthly and lowly humour with which your mind is full. Tell us one of those merry or pathetic stories that you have gathered in your long acquaintance with the working women of London. An aeroplane is magnificent, but it makes me tremble lest it nose-dive."

In strong contrast to Mrs. Lawrence stood her husband, a man of small rhetorical power, and little moved by passion, but singularly capable of definite exposition and the expression of a cold and deadly indignation. As a Cambridge mathematician of the highest eminence, he viewed events, motives, and actions in a logical and necessary order of cause and effect, like sums that add up right, or problems to which a solution can certainly be found. His speeches were so often described as "lucid" that he grew sick of the word ; but it was the right word all the same. If a course of action had to be arranged or explained, he was the one to do it, and I always listened to him with peculiar pleasure ; for to listen to his clear-cut and orderly statement was like

returning to Bach after more recent music. Perhaps it was his mathematical genius which gave a certain assurance to his manner—a dominant, not to say domineering assurance—which was of great assistance to him as editor of the Union’s famous paper, *Votes for Women*, which he conducted with fine persistence from October 1907, until his retirement early in 1914, when we of the United Suffragists took over the paper, with Evelyn Sharp as editor. But besides being a great mathematician, Pethick Lawrence had passed through the legal training for the Bar, and possessed a distinctly legal mind. The militant side of “The Movement” must therefore have been even more distasteful to him than to others, especially when militancy developed from passive resistance, in which only the Militants suffered, into active attacks upon property, such as the organised breaking of West-End shop-windows on March 1, 1912. In the subsequent trial of himself, Mrs. Lawrence, and Mrs. Pankhurst for conspiracy in that offence, he admitted that as a member of the legal profession, he was deeply sensible of the necessity of preserving law and order, and as one whose personal view of the responsibilities of citizenship went far beyond what the law enforced, he pointed out how in ordinary circumstances the methods which has been employed, for which he felt the greatest repugnance, would have been absolutely unjustifiable. But he then reviewed the history of the last few years, and told how he and Mrs. Lawrence had calmly and deliberately come to the conclusion that the course of action adopted by the Militants was the right one, in view of the deception and trickery that had been practised by politicians.

On February 27, 1907, I had to make my first speech for Women Suffrage, presiding at a breakfast given to prisoners released that morning from Holloway, and I was proud to take that place because Keir Hardie had taken it at the previous similar occasion, and Christabel sat next me. After that, though much too cool and restrained to be a moving speaker,

I was often obliged to speak at meetings great and small—at Queen's Hall, Trafalgar Square, and all over London and the country. I helped to carry banners in the enormous processions, wrote for *Votes for Women*, chiefly rhymed burlesques on events, but also serious accounts of the many violent struggles with mobs and police ; and I was sometimes summoned to give evidence at the trials. Once I even ventured to join a procession of men and women who went to sing like troubadours outside the lofty towers of Holloway where Christabel was imprisoned ; but, happily, my voice was drowned in the general chorus.

A more violent but far easier crisis in my activities was reached at the Albert Hall meeting on December 5, 1908, when Mr. Lloyd George had undertaken to address the Liberal women on the burning subject. Unhappily, he began with historic references to Queen Elizabeth, who was no longer a burning subject, and while he was thus engaged a large batch of women in the front rows who had been imprisoned suddenly removed their cloaks, revealing the prisoner's garb, thickly stamped with the broad arrow. That was a little disconcerting to the orator, but still an anxious silence was maintained till the war cry of " Deeds not Words " arose in one of the boxes, and immediately chaos and turmoil ensued. The crowds of Liberal stewards went mad with political fury. They rushed upon the Union women with what the *Manchester Guardian* (no friends to Militants) rightly called " nauseating brutality." They seized them like savage dogs. They bumped them down the steps of the orchestra. They dragged them over chairs by the hair. They assaulted them with obvious indecency. Still, one after another, the women rose in their places to utter the defiant cry.

I had gone as a mere spectator, and was quietly seated in the eighth row of the area. I had even been talking in a friendly way with the stewards, who individually were as decent as the rest of us usually are. But the sight of this

filthy treatment was too abhorrent, and springing up I shouted : “ Is it to be ‘ ruthlessly ’ again, Mr. Lloyd George ? ” This question I kept repeating, referring to Mr. George’s order to the stewards at a previous meeting to “ Fling them out ruthlessly.” Thereupon Mr. Lloyd George, knowing me by sight, shook a reproachful finger at me, and cried : “ Oh, Mr. Nevinston, I wonder at a man of your education behaving like this ! ” Education or not, I continued so to behave till the Liberal stewards crowded round me, and attempted to rush me out of the hall. In its report of the affair, the *Telegraph* declared I “ floored one of the stewards with a mighty blow from the shoulder ” ; but I have no recollection of that exploit, though I hope the account was true. At all events, when the stewards were on the point of throwing me down the steps to the door, I shook myself free and rushed clear up another gangway almost to the platform, greatly augmenting the confusion, and giving them a fine run for their money. At last they secured me, and, having paralysed me for the moment by a heavy blow on the back of the neck (what the schoolboys call “ rabbiting ”), they dragged me out of the hall into the open air in a gasping and tattered condition. As I sat there recovering, I was amused to notice that each of the women, as one by one they were flung out after me, no matter how horribly hurt and torn, first put her hat straight, if any hat was left.

On reaching home that night, I found a note from Gardiner “ suspending ” me from service on the *Daily News* until further notice. I cycled to his house and told him I had done only what he or any other decent person would have done—rather an unfortunate defence, seeing that he had been sitting behind Mr. Lloyd George all the time. He said he would submit the case to his Board of Directors, and I was sent to “ play,” as the workers say, for a week. Mean-time Brailsford, Bentley, G. H. Perris (our foreign editor), and Henry W. Smith, the news editor, all threatened to

resign unless I were restored to my position. And indeed the Board did not seriously hesitate. "Fully appreciating my motives, etc.," they invited me back into the fold, where I was welcomed with touching warmth by the whole staff. But further trouble arose over Brailsford's letter to the editor or to the Board upon the subject ; for though he was soon to become widely known as the author and most diligent promoter, with Lord Lytton, of the Suffrage Conciliation Bills, his tone towards his "superiors" was seldom conciliatory, nor was Mrs. Brailsford's. Of course, I in my turn threatened resignation if he were dismissed, and much confused negotiation followed before the affair was settled—by a settlement which lasted barely nine months.

During that interval I continued as before speaking for the Union, writing for it, joining in the processions, and defending it, often against riotous opposition, at the *Nation* lunches and elsewhere. Then, on September 24, 1909, came the news that the women on hunger-strike in a Birmingham gaol were being fed by force. Mr. Herbert Gladstone was then Home Secretary, but Charles Masterman was put up to answer Keir Hardie's repeated questions about the abomination, and to defend it as "ordinary hospital treatment." I wrote indignant letters to the *Manchester Guardian*, which immediately issued an admirable leader supporting my protest, and to the *Daily News*, in which Gardiner had written a leader describing the process as "repulsive." But on September 28, another leader appeared excusing the abomination. I wrote at once in answer, and next day Brailsford came up from his holiday in Devon, threatening resignation. Having seen Gardiner, who pathetically explained the difficulties of his position (as he did to me also that evening), since he was always torn between Brailsford and me on the one side and certain people in authority on the other, Brailsford came to discuss the whole matter with me, admitting that as we two appeared to stand almost alone, we might perhaps be eccentric ! I was astonished at

such a humble mood, nor did it last for more than a few hours. Before leaving for Devon that night, he sent in his resignation, and I think my letter to the same effect must have caught his up in the post. Canon Barnett, J. A. Hobson, and Gardiner himself, in a most kindly and flattering letter, urged me to reconsider, but this was one of the very few cases in which compromise was, unhappily, impossible, and on October 5, *The Times* published a joint letter from Brailsford and myself (chiefly written by him) to explain our reasons for a step so decisive, and, in journalism, so unusual. As Gardiner entreated me not to leave him “in a hole” by departing at once, I agreed to stay on for another month, or “till he was suited,” and I noticed that, for some obscure reason, the leaders I wrote during that month were the best I ever wrote.

To both Brailsford and myself the loss of income was, of course, serious, and neither of us has obtained regular work on any daily paper since. But at the time I suffered most acutely from the loss of Fleet Street. Self-distrustful though I always was, going in trepidation every night down to the office, tormented by the terror that I should not be able to write a single word, I had become so inured to Fleet Street that my spirits rose (they still rise) when I snuffed its distinctive smell. I loved to hear the vast machines humming and purring, like great tom-cats. The moment I began to write, I loved even the writing. It was a delight to see the galley-slips of the leaders beginning to come down for correction before I had finished the end, and then to read bit by bit, and to find that I had hardly ever to make an alteration. But, above all, I loved to sit there a whole night in advance of the dining, dancing, or sleeping world, knowing what others would know only at breakfast or in the morning train, when many of them would be quoting my leader as their own opinion, and more would be cursing it as poison. In an essay called “Farewell to Fleet Street,” written just after I left the paper, I tried to express my regret at this loss.

I imagine myself standing desolate on Hampstead Heath, as I have often stood, and contemplating from afar the lights that might be Fleet Street's, while near at hand some old lady implored her little dog to return from his evening walk, and a penny whistle piped the air of "When other lips," or "The last rose of summer," or "My lodging's on the cold ground." Thinking of the familiar news-editor's room, I wrote :

"The voice of all the world is now heard in that silent room. From moment to moment news is coming of treaties and revolutions, of sultans deposed and kings enthroned, of commerce and failures, of shipwrecks, earthquakes, and explorations, of wars and flooded camps and sieges, of intrigue, diplomacy, and assassination, of love, murder, revenge, and all the public joy and sorrow, and business of mankind. All the voices of fear, hope and lamentation echo in that silent little room. Maps hang on the walls, and guide-books are always ready, for who knows where the next event may come to pass upon this energetic little star, already twisting for a hundred million years around the sun ? "

After our resignation from the *Daily News*, Brailsford turned his enormous energy and unflagging resolution to promoting the successive Conciliation Bills with a Parliamentary Committee under the direction of Lord Lytton. For myself, during the next few years, my services to the Union and the cause were not to be compared with his ; for they consisted mainly in speaking at meetings wherever I was asked to go, writing for the Union's paper whenever I was asked to write, and taking part in the numerous processions and demonstrations. Some of these were of great size and great beauty, for the Union developed a genius for organisation and beautiful arrangement. Such was a vast demonstration in Hyde Park on June 18, 1910, and the still

greater general procession of all the Suffrage Societies to the Albert Hall on June 17, 1911, on which occasion I was asked to ride at the head of our Men's Political Union, bearing our standard, an enormous flag attached to a large and heavy pole. Happily I was mounted on a wise and beautiful mare, who, though disturbed in mind at the shouts and cheering all the way from the Embankment through St. James's and along the length of Piccadilly, entered into the spirit of the occasion and marched with decorum; except that every now and then she turned her head round to wonder at the banner, and once while we were halted outside the Ritz Hotel, seeing within reach a little girl's straw hat surrounded with life-like daisies, festooned about the brim, she proceeded to bite at it for hay, costing me half-a-crown in compensation to the child.

That procession, which was about five miles long, was headed by seven hundred women prisoners dressed in white, and bearing symbols of imprisonment and victory, but the numbers of prisoners were increased by over two hundred in one day when the truce broke in the following November (21st). And so the struggle against obstinate prejudice and political perfidy went on with ever-increasing violence until one afternoon, as I happened to be walking, not quite accidentally, in Regent Street, just as the clock struck five on March 1, 1912, I heard the plate-glass windows in nearly all the big shops go smash under the sharp contact of hammers and stones. The same catastrophes were happening in Bond Street and other places of fashionable resort. It was the biggest assault yet made on the laws of property, and it led to the break-up of the Union's quarters in Clement's Inn, and the escape of Christabel to Paris, and the trial of Mrs. Pankhurst and the Lawrences for conspiracy under the Malicious Damage of Property Act (May 15 to 22, 1912). I was present through the trial. Mr. Tim Healy defended them, but each spoke also in defence, and I never heard

them speak better or with more characteristic difference. Sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, they soon starved themselves free, though forcibly fed, and then, most unfortunately, they parted. The "split" followed their separation throughout that summer; and on the fatal day of October 17, 1912, it was announced by Mrs. Pankhurst in the Albert Hall. When the news came to me in Bulgaria, it seemed fatal indeed.

Do what we would, I felt all through the year 1913 that the Movement was weakening, and the prospect of struggle seemed to stretch out to all eternity. The relations between the W.S.P.U. and us who had tried to serve with them so long became more and more strained, until the officials in their new quarters became openly hostile and shut the doors against us. In the following year also the Lawrences resigned from the conduct of the paper which they had run with such success, and very reluctantly we formed a new society called the United Suffragists—a society comprising men and women alike. We were but a small band, with an executive of twelve members: Mrs. Ruth Cavendish Bentinck, Bertha Brewster, Major Gillespie (a retired gunner, soon to win fame for splendid service on the Ypres salient), Albert Dawson, George Lansbury, Gerald and Barbara Gould, May Whitty (Dame May Webster, the actress), Laurence Housman (poet and artist), Elaine Whelen, Evelyn Sharp, and myself. We had difficult work before us. There was the paper and its office to maintain, and every other Suffrage society regarded us with suspicion or animosity. Yet I may say that the United Suffragists kept the flag flying with extraordinary persistency during the terrible years of the war, when the energies of most among us were diverted, as was natural, to other labours, and it is to our society that I think the final triumph must be attributed at least equally with those made by others of greater name.

I can say this because all the other members would admit that our success and our very existence through those four

years from February 10, 1914, to February 1918, were almost entirely due to the brilliant mind and dogged resolution of Evelyn Sharp, who inspired our members to maintain their enthusiasm. She had served the W.S.P.U. with unfailing loyalty and enthusiasm from its origin to the disastrous “ split ” ; had been twice imprisoned, had been flung out of unnumbered meetings with customary brutality ; and had been rightly accounted among the most eloquent speakers. For she was driven to speech by a white-hot indignation that blazed in her words rather than in outward gesture or visible emotion, and she possessed the art of capturing an audience by humour and pathos combined—a strange combination, beyond the power of any other speaker in the Movement. She had always written much for the paper, had been appointed by the editors to conduct it during Christabel’s absence in Paris, and had acted under Pethick Lawrence after the “ split.” Now she took it up alone, and ran it without failing to the end, perpetually hampered as she was by her own necessary work, and for many months by a venomous Government persecution, which declared her bankrupt, for tax-resistance, and stripped her rooms of all furniture, including the typewriter on which her livelihood depended quite as much as a carpenter’s on his tools. They even ripped up the carpets, cut off the telephone, carted off the washing-stand, and set a bailiff to sit in her room all day. And this because she acted on what we had so often been told by historians and statesmen was the very basis of British freedom : that taxation and representation go together. Even her private letters were diverted and opened, and every penny of her royalties confiscated. All this was done with a malignant brutishness that would have broken any other spirit, but hers did not break. The women of to-day owe their political emancipation to a very gallant and wise band of women, who have worked and suffered for them—one can easily name the chief as Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Wolstenholme-Elmy, Dr. Garrett-Anderson and her

daughter, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Barbara Ayrton Gould, and many others. But whoever there were, Evelyn Sharp will always be counted among the highest of that band. It was she who wrote the United Suffragists' manifesto, ending with the words, "A merry heart goes all the way." How far she contrived to keep that merry heart I cannot tell; but she went all the way.

When the war came, I was much away during the first two years in Flanders, France, the Dardanelles, Salonika and Egypt. But for most of the summer of 1916 I was again at home, and it happened to be then that the Suffrage cause began to move with great rapidity. I need only mention the following steps: In July the United Suffragists Executive held a consultation upon the Government's proposal of making a new Register for the election that could not be long postponed, and we suggested the formation of a "Speaker's Conference" to draw up terms on which women could be admitted. Their inclusion was strongly supported by Massingham in the *Nation*, and by John Galsworthy in a letter to *The Times*, and it was soon seen that the policy of the whole Press, as judged especially by J. L. Garvin's articles in the *Observer*, and even by the change in the *Daily Mail*, was quickly swinging round. Sir John Simon took up the cause in the House of Commons with an enthusiasm uncommon in one of his cool temperament, and presided over a large conference in a committee-room attended by many members and the leaders of most Suffrage Societies (August 15, 1916). I was deputed to represent the United Suffragists, and urged the appointment of a Speaker's Conference, at the same time maintaining that the simplest solution was Adult Suffrage, which my society had then adopted as their programme. On both points I was energetically supported by Sir John Simon, Mr. Goldstone, a Labour M.P., and one or two other Members, and I spoke with confidence because in the previous week Mr. Asquith had announced in the

House of Commons that he now regarded the women's cause as “an unanswerable case” (August 14, 1916).

The Speaker's Conference of thirty-two Members was appointed in September. It held its first sitting on October 12, and issued its Report on February 7, 1917. That did not go so far as the United Suffragists wished, nor so far as was wished by the National Council for Adult Suffrage, of which I had been appointed chairman in the previous autumn. But it enfranchised about six million women—far more than we had hoped under our previous Bills—and it was good for a start. Three days later the Adult Suffragists organised a great meeting of all the Suffrage Societies who chose to attend in the Kingsway Hall. Sir John Simon, who had himself been a prominent member of the Speaker's Conference, spoke on the new proposal, and was followed by Miss Margaret Ashton, Percy Alden, Miss Mary Macarthur, and her husband, W. C. Anderson. That meeting confirmed my belief that the cause was safe, but though a Government Bill was promised in the following month, delays and hesitations still intervened, and it was not till December 7, 1917, that the “Representation of the People Bill” was carried in the House of Commons, without a division.

Still the Lords hesitated and delayed. February 6, 1918, came, and the Parliament was to be prorogued next day. The Lords had inserted amendments on Proportional Representation and the Alternative Vote which the Commons refused to accept. Could the Bill be saved? All that afternoon the amendments, rejections, and compromises passed to and fro between the two Houses. I stood in the outer lobby with two of our executive—Evelyn Sharp and Bertha Brewster. Mrs. Fawcett, I believe, was in the House of Lords, and others were with her, but in the central lobby we were the only three present out of all who had fought so long and suffered so much. The anxiety was almost unendurable. To and fro the messengers still passed, and the Bill was in peril from hour to hour. At last the Commons

agreed to a compromise. The Alternative Vote was dropped, and a Commission was to test Proportional Representation in one hundred constituencies. At 7.40 the Bill was passed. At 8.45 the Royal Assent was signed by Commission, and the struggle of so many years was won.

CHAPTER XXII

WANDERINGS MANY

WHAT A RELIEF it was to turn from the deception of Liberal politicians, the filth of Liberal stewards, and the violent ribaldry of similar opponents of Woman Suffrage to the storms and buffetings of the North Sea ! After my resignation from the *Daily News* that autumn of 1909, I remained grievously out of work, and it was like the raising of a siege when in the spring of 1910 Mr. Thomas Wells of *Harper's Magazine* asked me to visit the trawlers of the North Sea with an American artist, Mr. M. J. Burns, an excellent draughtsman of ships and water.

We went with the Gamecock Fleet, one of the four Fleets of steam-trawlers then dredging the North Sea day and night all the year round. And the Gamecock was one of the three that could afford a " Mission Ship," maintained by the Deep Sea Mission. England was not rich enough to supply the fourth fleet with one, though the Mission Ships trawled for their own keep, and the missionary was a surgeon, who attended to the daily accidents and kept his ship as a hospital, besides superintending the spiritual welfare of the fleet by gathering the skippers into his ship to sing hymns on Sunday. The favourite hymn was " The Old Ship of Zion," which ends each verse with a shout of " Ship ahoy !"—a shout with which the skippers almost " shivered our timbers." Another favourite was, " We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away." But the hymn that interested me most was the one with that peculiar chorus :

*Count your blessings, name them one by one ;
Count your blessings, see what God has done !
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Nearly all the skippers on the Gamecock Fleet hailed from Hull or Grimsby or Yarmouth, and they regarded every kind of "foreigner" with amused contempt. Yet the Admiral, who flew the dark blue flag, was a Devon man by birth, and had been brought up to trawl under sail. Short he was—an oblong of strength—from shoulder tip to shoulder tip measuring just half his height. His great voice bellowed across the storm to passing ships, and he regarded the megaphone as a womanly and degenerate expedient. Though born to an alien sea, he knew the Dogger Bank with its valleys, plains, and foot-hills better than most of the east coast countrymen in the forty-five trawlers of his fleet. He walked the water with the same serene knowledge of the bottom as he possessed of the docks and lanes in Hull ; and, outside a failure in the day's fishing, two things alone could disturb his calm—instructions from Billingsgate ordering him to shift his ground from the place he had appointed for the fleet, and hearing the ignorant speak of the North Sea as the German Ocean.

Forty-five ships were under the Admiral's orders, but some were always away, for each went home in rotation at the end of every six weeks, as the coal ran low. And as one started for shore, the others blew their whistles, with more or less vigour according to the departing skipper's popularity. The fleet as a body remained at sea summer and winter, but each man was at home for three or four days every six weeks, their wives paying the rent and looking after the family meantime, and I have no doubt the arrangement was satisfactory on both sides.

Say there were thirty-five trawlers out in the fleet at one time, and that each trawler covered 90 feet of ground as it

dragged. The whole fleet was thus day after day scraping over a surface of 1,050 yards, almost without stopping, and while the trawl was down each vessel moved at about two miles an hour. The trawls would be down for at least twenty hours out of the twenty-four, and the fleet as a body would thus have scraped up the fish over a strip of ground forty miles in length by more than two-thirds of a mile broad. And when the scraping went on every day and night, winter and summer alike, there must have been a good deal of agitation in the lands that lie below the sea, and the domestic habits of the various populations down there would become confused and distracted. But from England alone four of these fleets put out, and Holland, Germany, Denmark, Norway and France worked trawlers too. So that by this time of creation it has become rather doubtful whether there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.

After my return from the Dogger, no peaceful monotony interrupted the variegated conflicts for Woman Suffrage and the exposure of the cocoa slavery till, in the early autumn of that year (1910), I was invited by the Finns to visit their country, with a small party of other journalists.

Finland is a vast country, stretching through six or seven degrees of latitude, and it is all wood where it is not water. All is a forest of spruce, Scotch fir, birch, aspen and mountain ash, growing on granite knolls, and interspersed with blue circles or broad, white expanses of lake. In this forest I saw many birds—capercaillie, ptarmigan, various kinds of grouse, woodpeckers, and divers. Elks also roam wild about it, and as I happened to be there during the few days when they may be hunted, I was taken out with a shooting party into the forest near Helsingfors, and given the privilege of pursuing one huge elk with one large dog. If only the splendid creature had kept to the woods, we might still be hunting him, but, tired of running about, he took to a lake, affording a clear mark to the rifles, which blazed away in his direction and hit him fairly often. The big dog then

caught him up in the water and began biting and eating him by bits, until at last the elk sank his head under water and was drowned. The body was then dragged ashore and disembowelled—the whole business as cruel and bloody a sport as I have ever witnessed.

If in Finland you are so unhappy as to seek nothing but scenery, you need hardly move from wherever you may be, though at Imatra you may stare yourself bewildered at the portentous rapids which drain the series of lakes, and were then the chosen health-resort of unhappy Russian girls and boys, who jumped into them in such numbers that the villages below the falls complained that they really could not go on burying them for nothing. But climb any high ground in the centre of Finland—I think none is over 1,000 feet, and very little half as much—and, if you can, rise above the trees. You will then look far out on every side over lakes and forest, and more lakes and more forest, till lines of low granite hills draw the grey horizon, with nothing but the curve of earth to end the repetition.

But sometimes, near at hand, you may see a clearing in the woods, where a few peasant houses are scattered among small patches of rye, and potatoes, or meadows thickly grazed by cows. And sometimes, by a lakeside, a clean, wooden town, wired over for telephones, electric light, and perhaps a tramway, may be gathered around a Lutheran church, built big enough to hold all the people who will be rowed by their women across the lakes for Communion once a month. Perhaps an old castle may stand on an island rock ; but there are few castles in a land so remote from the stream of history, and, much more likely, you will see a saw-mill for converting the forests into the building materials of London suburbs ; or a pulping-mill, into which the pines that have been slowly floated as rafts down the series of lakes are pushed, like the pigs at Chicago. Round spin the saws, down the gutter-shaft shoots the block (say two feet long), whirling knives strip off the bark, crushing rollers grind the wood into

a liquid squash, it is passed like water over rolling cloths, women pick it off and hang it up like shirts to dry, it is baked in ovens of scorching air, it is piled into bales, and off it goes to England. Only one more pulping there, and the gallant tree is newspaper—a complete newspaper, but for the printed matter, which is added later.

In Finland two passions occupied the people's mind—education and patriotism. In every village or small town I could be sure that the most important buildings would be schools. Elementary schools, commercial schools, technical schools, Lyceums or classical schools, deaf-and-dumb schools, gymnastic schools—a town that would escape notice in our country would have them all. And in no other country was such equal opportunity for every kind of knowledge, livelihood, and work given to women. Even then, all women over twenty-four had the vote on equal terms with men and could sit on the Diet if elected, as about twenty were. Women served as bricklayers in the towns. In Helsingfors the girls wore the little white caps of the undergraduate. In the schools they worked beside boys up to the highest course. Far out in the country I found a large building, in a very beautiful situation, where about a hundred young peasants spent half the year acquiring knowledge for its own sake, while work on the fields or forests was slack ; and about one-third of them were women. There were forty similar schools for men and women peasants throughout the country, and I was told that neither in them nor in the mixed schools or the University had scandal been known. Which shows that miracles *do* happen ; or perhaps familiarity breeds indifference.

A month after my arrival the Finnish Diet was dissolved by Stolýpin because it had refused, as infringements of Finland's rights, the demands laid before it for the election of members for the Russian Duma and the Imperial Council, a contribution to Imperial defence, and the granting of special rights to Russians in the country ; and as a further

step towards the "Russification" of the country as contemplated by Stolýpin's measures in the packed Russian Duma of 1910. A still further step was taken in January 1913, when the whole Court of Appeal at Viborg was arrested, excepting only the chairman, for a similar refusal, and the member of the Duma who had exultantly cried "*Finis Finlandiæ*" at Stolýpin's Act in 1910, appeared to be justified in his prophecy. The Great War, the revolution, and the deposition of the Tsardom appeared to have saved the country's freedom for the time, in spite of internal conflict. One cannot now foretell whether Soviet Russia will attempt to renew the Imperialist policy by suppressing the freedom of Finland as she suppressed the freedom of Georgia in spite of all solemn pledges.

I am not going to trace the course of callous diplomacy along which the rulers of the European world "stumbled" (Mr. Lloyd George's word) into the crash of three years later. I need only mention that it was on the 1st of July in this year (1911) that the German gunboat *Panther* suddenly appeared at anchor in the small harbour of Moroccan Agadir, and that the challenge was answered on the 21st by Mr. Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Bankers' Dinner. As it was known that Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey had prompted that speech, war was expected; but for the time it was postponed, and I suppose that few except the rulers, their diplomatists, and their military agents really contemplated such an appalling disaster as possible. Accordingly we of the Balkan Committee proceeded with our small endeavours to counteract as far as possible the baleful effects of misgovernment under the Young Turk leaders of the revolution against Abdul Hamid. Like others, we had welcomed that revolution, but were soon to discover the truth that a race may change its form of government without changing its nature. It had become evident that the policy of the Young Turks was the policy of the Red Sultan enlarged.

After the suppression of the Albanian revolt in the spring and summer of 1911, an Albanian section of the Macedonian Relief Fund, with Bertram Christian still as chairman, was started for mitigating the distress of that people. No distinction of religion was made, though it was natural that the Christian villages in the northern mountains, having suffered most, should need most help. At the end of August I was sent out to assist in the purchase and distribution of food and shelter. After arranging, with the help of Mr. J. R. Spence, our Consul in Trieste, for large supplies of maize, blankets, and tarred felt, I sailed down that beautiful and historic coast, past Pola (where Austria had eight battleships at anchor and was building more), past Ragusa and Diocletian's Spalato till we entered the magnificent, land-locked harbour of Cattaro—magnificent for shelter, but of small service, I think, in war-time, since a single battleship stationed at the narrow entrance could bottle up the largest fleet. Climbing the long zigzag into stony Montenegro, I arrived at Cetinje (or Cettingne, pronounced Chéttinyě), where old Nicholas, clad in Montenegrin dress, was still ruling his little people in mock-patriarchal style, with a parasitic reliance upon subsidies in cash and arms from the two rival Powers of Austria and Russia. There also I found our British Minister, Count de Salis, descendant of ancient Tyrolese and Irish families, a man of unusual courage and intelligence, already conspicuous for service in Madrid, Cairo, and Berlin. When I knocked at the door of his little house, it was opened by a youngish-looking man in shirt-sleeves, obviously the valet, as I supposed. He showed me into a small library, and after some remarks on the weather, went on dusting and arranging the books, till at last I enquired if Count de Salis would receive me soon. "Oh, I am Count de Salis," he replied, and at once I recognised a natural friend, as indeed he has always shown himself.

Next day I passed out of Montenegrin territory down the lake to Scutari, where the Turkish passport-officer refused

me landing till, in answer to his repeated demands, I told him my father's name was George. Above the landing-stages and the bazaar (at that time one of the most beautiful in the Balkans, but soon to be destroyed by war and fire) towered the ancient fortress on its rock—a site full of history from the time of the Roman Empire down through the Venetian days when the castle was probably built, and was certainly defended against the onslaughts of the invading Turks, as one may see depicted in a painting on the walls of the Doge's Palace. Eastward extended the dusty road and houses scattered among gardens and wastes. So to the little inn ; for in those days there was only one, though on my second visit two years later, others were being introduced to please the international troops together with tea-gardens, marble-topped tables, brothels, and similar emblems of Western civilisation.

In the hotel, I found Edith Durham, whom I had come out to assist in her work for the Albanians. Since she passed into the country from our relief work in Ochrida, early in 1904, she had made Albania her home, drawn there first by desire to collect relics of prehistoric or ancient symbolism, such as the sun pattern still tattooed on the foreheads of many Albanian women, or the little bird in stone or wood universal on tombs in certain regions. And she had stayed on, partly with this scientific purpose, partly held by the alluring savagery of the country and her affection for the primitive simplicity of the people. Already at that time she was known among the mountain tribes as the *Kralitza* or Queen, and she deserved their admiring confidence as much as they deserved her sympathy. By courage and honesty rather than by mere kindness she had won the hearts of a people distinguished for courage and honesty among all Balkan nations, who in some cases may be credited with other virtues. Kindly and generous she had, of course, shown herself, ready to undertake any journey and to work day and night to relieve sickness or distress ; and in such tasks she

was often assisted by a medical knowledge derived, I suppose, from her father, a London physician. But there was little of the sentimental nurse or philanthropist about Edith Durham. Her manner towards strangers and people whom she distrusted was abrupt to rudeness, and she would contradict her best friends with a sharpness that silenced dispute if not opinion. Her language in conversation was even more racy than the style of her books, and she had a way of hitting off affectation or absurdity with a slashing phrase that was not exactly coarse, but made the cultured jump. I have never known a woman to express facts or opinions with such startling vigour, especially in disagreement.

Of course, I put myself under her orders, and our only difficulty came from the wild Albanians' simple faith in her absolute power and bottomless wealth. As she was the *Kralitza*, they mistakenly concluded that I had been sent out by King George V as the *Kral* or King, and indeed the Powers of Europe could not have done better for the country than appoint her Queen, with me as her Grand Vizier. So the *Kral* and *Kralitza* spent the days in the counting-house, counting out the money, tearing up various kinds of cloth for garments, apportioning tarred felt for roofing, and storing stacks of timber in the outhouses of a large stone building called the "Paget House." It had been erected by Mr. George Paget in one of those delightful whims that sometimes make Englishmen so interesting, and, though long uninhabited, it was still furnished with a strange assortment of Persian china, Afghan weapons, and typical French cartoons. After a week or so of this royal employment, the *Kralitza* sent me up into the northern mountains to explore the needs of the various tribes and report. Accompanied by her old Albanian guide, who spoke German, I crawled and climbed and plunged about among glorious mountains day after day, passing from tribe to tribe, and at night usually sleeping with joy under the stars.

Some days later Miss Durham herself accompanied me on

a long and difficult ride up the wild gorge east of Scutari towards the central mountains of Shala, till at last we reached the staring village of Summa, where misery was at its worst, the people eating grass. We promised them £10 worth of maize if they would fetch it from Scutari, which the women did, carrying the sacks on their backs all up that steep and toilsome ascent, as I saw them go. Later again we rode off together to distribute a load of quinine among the fever-stricken peasants who had been kept all summer on the poisonous marshes of the Mati with the flocks that they otherwise take back to the mountains in the fever season. Along the stony road to Alessio we slowly followed a crowd of Turkish troops on their way back to Constantinople or Asia from the port of Medua, a few miles west of Alessio. But when they came to the point where the road turns off to the sea, I observed that they halted in confusion, and presently began climbing the steep path to the ancient fortress of Alessio, and carrying up their arms and stores. Suddenly, in the little town at the foot of the citadel, we heard that three Italian warships were blockading Medua to prevent reinforcements crossing to Tripoli. Tripoli ! So war had really begun. It was September 30, 1911, and for seven years there was to be no peace in the world.

We rode on to Braga-Mati (the marshes of the River Mati), and so on to a large farmhouse at Gursi, strongly protected from the Evil One by skulls of horses and goats, some of which were nailed to a cross. There we found a vast swarm of fevered people, about 1,000 I suppose ; for the priest had foolishly told of our coming. Stuffing the women into the kitchen because they were ashamed to be treated in the presence of men, we did what we could in distributing our poor fifty boxes of fifty tabloids apiece, and of course they would not anything like go round ; for the sick longed to devour them by handfuls. Then we rode back, leaving much disappointment. At Alessio we met a Turkish officer who told us the smoke we saw on the horizon came from an

Italian cruiser, and that war had been declared some days before. "Only England can save the Turkish Empire," he cried in German. "It's all owing to that cursed Abdul Hamid. We have no fleet. Only England can save us!" "It is the beginning," Edith Durham said to me.

Keeping to the Drin's left bank, we rode on, but afterwards had to ford the river in deep water several times, and from one hindrance or another did not reach the final bridge into Scutari till long after dark. There we were arrested as prisoners of war, and shut up in a guard-room while a long report was written in the usual Turkish manner. We were then transferred to a police court in the bazaar, where more reports were written, Miss Durham meantime keeping the police laughing by the shadows of animals and men that she threw on a wall with her hands. The central police court came next, but someone there could speak French, and at midnight we were enjoying wine and eggs in her room, after tasting the first fruits of the poisonous war.

Then cholera, with a high death-rate, broke out in Scutari, and the neighbouring countries declared a quarantine blockade, partly political. So there I had to stay bottled up, distributing more bales of varied cloths and more sacks of maize, and watching the Vali appealing with eloquence for five thousand loyal Albanians to defend the Padishah; to which appeal thirteen Moslems and two Christians responded. But hearing that a boat was trying to escape near the mouth of the Bojana, the swift river that drains the Scutari Lake, I made my way down before dawn one morning and boarded a little Croatian steamer, loaded with bugs. So to Fiume, Trieste, and Venice—Venice, rather crumbled and fallen awry since first I saw her thirty-two years before, but always beautiful.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GATHERING STORM

DURING THE REMAINDER of 1911, and for the greater part of the next year, I was much occupied with the extreme difficulties besetting the Woman Suffrage Movement. But in the midst of these distractions, A. G. Gardiner asked me to go to Belfast, where trouble was expected owing to Mr. Winston Churchill's approaching visit to expound the Government's scheme of Home Rule. Now that the Liberal Government had rendered the veto of the House of Lords comparatively impotent, it seemed evident that a Home Rule Bill could be driven through at last, and the smouldering commercial and religious animosity of "Ulster" was fanned to fury at the thought. For by "Ulster" was meant the Protestant minority of the province (then consisting of nine counties), the descendants of the settlers "planted" in the most fertile district during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—descendants who retained unchanged the racial passions and the religious odiums of those comparatively distant times.

Trouble was feared owing to a proposal that Mr. Churchill should speak in the Ulster Hall, the very emblem of political and religious animosity in Belfast. "There will be bloodshed!" was the cry, and perhaps there might have been. At all events, Mr. Churchill yielded, as nearly all English politicians yield to "Ulster"; and spoke instead in a pavilion attached to a football ground up on the dreary fields near the Belfast Dogs Home. He read his speech, with such effect as a read speech can have, interrupted only by

six Suffragettes, who were flung out with comparative politeness. Then John Redmond and Joe Devlin spoke, without a note, without any guide but their own sense of justice ; and that made an incalculable difference.

In the summer of that year I enjoyed one of my few deliberate and prolonged (nearly a fortnight) holidays, since I entered regular journalism in 1897, and for the first time I visited Rome. On the last day of August that year (1912) I lost one who had been my best friend for many years—not by death but by a savagery of disagreement on my part. And such a loss is always worse than loss by death. As I once said :

*But that so dear a thing
Should rot before we die
O Death, here is thy sting !
Here, Grave, thy victory !*

Just a fortnight before this irretrievable disaster, I was sent again to Belfast, this time by the great editor, C. P. Scott, of the *Manchester Guardian*. For throughout this ominous year the trouble in Ulster had been increasing, chiefly under the incitement of Sir Edward Carson, and rumours of civil war were awake already.

I was then suffering the hard time that a correspondent among the enemy must expect to suffer. At the Carsonite office in Belfast no information was allowed me. When Sir Edward Carson read the draft of the famous " Covenant " on the steps of Craigavon in the presence of all the Unionist members of Parliament, and all the correspondents, the Secretary, as I wrote at the time, " greeted me with scowls, and, like a silly child, refused me a copy of the document."

On September 28, 1912, the document of the Solemn Covenant never to recognise a " Home Rule Parliament " was laid out upon a kind of shrine, or altar beneath the dome of the City Hall. Sir Edward Carson signed it kneeling, begirt with something of Imperial pomp. At my side as I

watched, stood J. L. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*, and with characteristic worship of big personality, he kept telling me that he loved Carson, and had always loved Parnell too ; had, in fact, saved Parnell out of the ruins of his reputation in the brave days of old, when, I think, Garvin was still an unknown journalist, in Newcastle.

That night Sir Edward Carson left for England, and when two days later, William Maxwell, at that time correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, was crossing with me to Stranraer, I said to him " Ulster may be serious, but in a week or so you and I will besent on a more serious business." And so it happened ; for two days after reaching London I started for Bulgaria. That summer's miracle had been accomplished in the Balkans. The Christian races had for the moment—for at least six months—laid aside their deadly inter-racial hatreds, and had formed a Balkan League, with the one purpose of driving out the Turk while he was weakened by Italy's attack upon Tripoli. The architect of the League was James Bouchier, the famous *Times* correspondent in the Balkans, to whom the very existence of Bulgaria was due. As a member of the Balkan Committee I had known him before, and had marvelled at his knowledge and sagacity, maintained in spite of his infirmity of almost total deafness. A County Limerick man, he had been driven by that infirmity to resign a mastership at Eton, and had settled in Sofia as the intimate friend of Stamboulouff. When that great statesman was cut off by the assassination that awaits greatness in the Balkans, Bouchier continued to work for his adopted country, though how he managed to live on any terms with the " rogue elephant," Tsar Ferdinand, I never understood. Still less could I understand how he obtained his accurate and secret information upon all Balkan diplomacy and politics, when every point had either to be written out and shown to him or shouted in his ear with a voice that would re-echo through any palace or hotel. That he was a devoted musician was, I believe, not so wonderful, and yet it amazed

me to find him, after our day's work was over, sitting in his room at the Hotel Bulgarie, playing Bach or Beethoven on his little piano with skill and great enjoyment. So he would continue playing to me till far into the night, impenetrable to any sound but music.

War against Turkey was declared on October 18, a fortnight after I had arrived, and it was not till the 21st that we were all stuffed—sixty-eight of us—into a train and dragged through Philippopolis to the Bulgarian town of Stara Zagôra, where we were penned up for another week. Then the whole lot of us were sent lumbering along in a train to Mustapha Pasha, just across the Turkish frontier on the ancient main road, running from Sofia through Adrianople to Constantinople. In that town beside the Maritza I was kept for three weeks raging and fuming like the wintry river itself, or like the Thracian Bacchanals who tore Orpheus to pieces upon its banks. I camped in an empty Turkish house with Percival Phillips of the *Daily Express*, an excellent companion on campaign—prudent, unruffled, and, perhaps owing to his American origin, untouched by any partisan emotion concerning this cock-pit of Europe.

Because the war on the Bulgarian side was a "wash-out" for all correspondents it must not be thought that I was driven to underrate the fine accomplishment of Bulgaria's effort. I soon recognised the Bulgarian people for what they are—the most dogged, capable, highly educated, and silent—the only silent—nation in the Balkans. From first to last I never heard a speech, except in their Parliament, nor saw a trace of emotion, except a happy confidence. If there had been rhetoric or excitement, the people got over it before mobilisation. The soldiers of all ranks were forbidden to mention in letters the names or numbers of the killed or wounded and no official lists were published. For Bulgaria the campaign was a superb exploit, but for myself the experience of such restraint was bitter, especially as my sympathies were entirely on the Bulgarian side, and the

Bulgar authorities had to admit afterwards that they made a mistake in not securing a "good Press."

Two small points only I remember with pleasure : first, my rather adventurous climbs over the hills to heights from which the four graceful minarets of Adrianople's splendid mosque were visible. And again, I gladly recall that evening when Bouchier was returning from his usual ride upon his little white pony, and the population of Sofia had gathered in the great square to cheer him without ceasing, to carry him in their arms (and, I believe, the pony too !) and to proclaim him the true victor of Kirk Kilisseh and Lulé Burgas, the triumphant leader of the Bulgar race.

The winter of 1912 to 1913 was an ominous time for the world, and the evil omens weighed upon me also with increasing apprehension. At that time I find the repeated note in my diary : " Vague sense of danger all day, without any definite reason." And the dream which has haunted me since childhood began to recur—the dream of a terrible ship, like a dragon, coming into a bay where I was playing on the sand, and beginning to fire great guns into the lodging-houses ; whereupon I would awake with the cry of " War ! " and feel a melancholy cast over all my day. There was plenty in those months to fill myself and my friends with restless uncertainty and powerless indignation. Early in December 1912, an armistice had been concluded in the Balkans, and some weeks were occupied with a Conference in London. But no conference could then avail, and the war against Turkey was resumed early in February 1913, leading to the capture of old Albanian Janina by the Greeks (March 6) ; to the fall of Adrianople to the Bulgarians, assisted by Servian troops and guns (March 26) ; and the surrender of Albanian Scutari to the Montenegrins (April 23)—a shameful surrender after a prolonged and gallant siege, the shame falling on Essad Pasha, who betrayed the great fortress, and was almost certainly privy to the assassination of Hassan Riza Bey, its true defender. Meantime King George of

Greece had been assassinated in Salonika (March 18), and his successor, Constantine, who afterwards adopted the title of "Bulgaroktonos," or "Bulgar Slayer," from some Byzantine Emperor, never contributed to the peace of the world, though far indeed from deserving another title given by his friends—"The Napoleon of the Near East!"

These divergent shocks, now rousing the suspicions of the Central Powers, now the suspicions of the *Entente* surrounding the Central Powers, brought the European war close to an outbreak eighteen months sooner than the outbreak came. And still more dangerous than these events was the claim put forward at the beginning of winter by Pashitch, Servia's bird of ill-omen. That claim was to a wide passage or wedge driven through the heart of Albania so as to give Servia a free port upon the Adriatic either at Medua or Durazzo, or both. Italy and Austria at once took alarm, and the demand must have strengthened Austria's resolve to exterminate Servia, not only as the cat's paw of Russian ambition, but as in herself a perpetual annoyance.

For the time, I think, the outbreak was chiefly averted by Sir Edward Grey's gallant and true-hearted stand for the preservation of Albania from the wolves—the Montenegrins, the Servians and the Greeks—who were hanging round her frontiers waiting to tear her in pieces. Largely owing to his influence, the benignant Treaty of London was agreed upon soon afterwards (May 30, 1913), but it was never ratified, and what is called instinct told me that Albania was still, as I had described it in the *Chronicle* on November 27 of the previous year, the "danger-point of Europe." So I asked Robert Donald to send me out again, and to this he at once agreed but on the unusual terms that I was to receive £10 an article but pay my own expenses. I was so anxious to go that I would gladly have gone for nothing, if only I had been decently rich, and on June 5, 1913, I started again, and again I came to Trieste and our Consul Spence. But a fresh sign of that ominous time

was the wild enthusiasm of all the Italian population, in defiance, not so much of dominant Austria as of the continually encroaching Slavs—encroaching as the common brown rats have encroached upon the genteel black rat of old England.

So I came to Cetinje again, where Count de Salis received me with his friendly charm ; and then to Scutari, where the flags of the Great Powers now fluttered high on the fortress, strung side by side along a line, like a Monday's wash. Only five flags, for Russia stood aside, fearing to hurt the feeling of Montenegro, her pet little parasite. And on the landing-stage, where once sat the immovable Turk, now stood a private of the 3rd Yorks, ironically composed.

And in the one small inn there sat Edith Durham again, equally composed, answering the desperate questions of young British officers as to where they could buy butter, marmalade, and other necessities of British life which Albania had never known. Two days later, after paying respects to Admiral Burney in the "Paget House," we rode away together for a long journey through the Moslem and Orthodox south of Albania, since I had previously visited the Catholic north. From place to place we went, sometimes putting up for the night with a landowning Bey, sometimes with an Archbishop, sometimes with a rigid Mohammedan, who shut Miss Durham up in his harem, among other women, and sometimes sleeping under the fir trees or beside a spreading and marshy river, when night overtook us. From Alessio we passed on to an episcopal mansion (afterwards burnt down) on the mountain of Delbinishti, and so through the vast forest of Valona oaks to Kroja, the ancient capital of Skanderbeg, and on to Tirana, where, on the green under the magnificent cypress trees, we found the perfectly equipped remains of the army which Essad had been allowed to bring out from Scutari when he betrayed the fortress. And there in his own house (for he was a Tirana

man), we called on Essad himself, who received us in ordinary Turkish officer's uniform, but without medals. He looked about forty or forty-five, was rather tall and well-made, with longish hair and large moustache. He had a fairly honest manner, and seemed willing to comply. Like everyone else, he expressed a desire for peace and stability, but was known to keep some 3,500 men in Tirana at his command, and he showed great contempt for Ismail Kemal, who had proclaimed an independent Albania in the previous autumn and set up what he called a Government at Avlona. Essad said he hoped for a Prince from some neutral country but I had little doubt he thought of himself as that Prince. However, he seemed fair-spoken enough, and so polite that I rather regretted his subsequent treacherous career and terrible end by an assassin's bullet in Paris, though perhaps Miss Durham was right in saying that someone should have hanged him out of hand.

Following the mule track that was once the Roman Egnatian Way from Dyrrachium (opposite Brundisium) through Salonika to Byzantium, we reached Elbasan, where an Albanian, Afik Bey, one of the Bektashi sect of Islam (a reformed and partially secret sect, almost as peaceable and admirable as the Quakers) was quietly governing the large town on the principle of making the punishment fit the crime. Then we crossed the high watershed by a difficult path till we came into the Servian sphere and found a nest of Servian officers at Struga. In Ochrida, as at Struga, we heard from the Servian officers that a second Balkan war was almost certain, and they rejoiced to say that in this war they would fight the Bulgarians, their late allies, who had achieved by far the greatest task in the defeat of Turkey. They rejoiced because, in the end, each Balkan State detests its Christian neighbour more than it detests a common enemy. When we reached Kortcha, that Albanian town swarmed with Greek soldiers, as Ochrida with Servian, the Greek troops being under a Colonel

Kondoulis, himself Albanian by descent, sprung from one of the small Albanian colonies that were settled long ago in Attica ; but he spoke nothing but Greek. Two days after our arrival he posted a telegram on the gate of his head-quarters, announcing that war had begun two days before, between Greece and Servia on the one side, and Bulgaria on the other. The date was June 29, 1913—a day marking another milestone upon the road to ruin. For the Bulgars, weakened by their triumphs over the Turks, could now be rapidly driven from their conquests by Servians, Turks, and even by Greeks. Yet they might have held all at bay had not the Roumanians, with characteristic astuteness, grasped the opportunity of stabbing their hard-pressed friends in the back by advancing a fresh and untouched army to within sight of Sofia. This advantageous treachery resulted first in the fatal Treaty of Bucharest (August 10) ; next in the inevitable Treaty of Constantinople, giving Adrianople back to the Turks (September 29), and thirdly, if we look further into the future, in an alliance that I foretold in the *Chronicle* before the Treaty of Bucharest was signed—the alliance of Bulgaria with Turkey. To that alliance we may trace the entrance of Bulgaria on the side of Turkey and the Central Powers during the Great War, and the consequent evacuation of the Dardanelles by our own devoted armies in the winter of 1915-16.

But that incomparable disaster was still hidden from us by two years of time, and the chief trouble of Miss Durham and myself at Kortcha was to elude the endeavours of the Greek authorities to involve us in their propaganda. For, hearing of our presence, the Greek bishop ordered a public meeting to assemble in front of his house at a certain hour to collect an audience at the bayonet's point, giving it out that the Englishman was to speak in support of the Greek annexation. I hope I should have had the decency to die rather than speak for such an object, and as the Bishop had not even consulted me in the matter, Miss Durham and I

climbed a neighbouring hill, from which we had the satisfaction of watching the conscripted audience collect. In my absence, the Bishop addressed them himself, and we descended just in time to meet the crowd dispersing. As the Kortcha time was an hour later than our watches showed since we came from the west, our excuses were polite, though for once we used the methods of diplomacy.

We went on to Albania by easy stages. The seat of Government was a little yellow cottage about two miles from the town or village, and conveniently close to the refuge of the sea, always a suitable situation for any Balkan Government. Over the cottage floated the Albanian flag—a black eagle on crimson ground—and there the Council of Ministers gravely received us. We were ushered into the presence of the self-appointed President, Ismail Kemal Pasha, over seventy, benevolent, grave, but indecisive, he seemed to me.

For me that year ended, and the next (1914) began in a blaze of joy. As guest of Frederick and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, I was at Celerina, which stands in the upper Engadine between St. Moritz and Pontresina, at the junction of two passes into Italy. Again I was among high mountains ; again I could skate, with skill just above the average, and taste again the fearful joy of ski-ing.

“ Sense of imminent danger : I don’t know what,” I wrote in my diary again ; but, for the early months of that ominous year, most of us thought the immediate danger to our own country was gathering in Ireland. Early in March I was sent again to Belfast, and there I could watch hundreds, or even thousands, of young civilians being instructed in the ordinary military drill, as laid down in the Red Book of those days.

In Dublin I found that the Nationalists had formed a body of Irish Volunteers to protect their part of the country from the Ulster Volunteers, and the force was reckoned at about forty thousand men. Colonel Moore, brother of the fastidious writer and satirist, George Moore, and himself a notable

figure in Dublin society, was then in command, but arms were short, and soon afterwards Roger Casement wrote to me asking where rifles could be obtained. Unhappily, I could only refer him to the ordnance officers of the Ulster Volunteers, who might recommend the German firms from whom they were obtaining rifles and other arms through Hamburg.

Of equal interest to myself at the time was the recent formation of the Irish Citizen Army, a body numbering, I think, only about two thousand then, but organised, not for a Nationalist or political purpose, but to defend the workers who, under Jim Larkin and James Connolly, had created the Transport Workers' Union during the great strike of the previous autumn. Though no great progress could be made till the ancient Nationalist grievance had been rooted out, there seemed fair hope that the social abominations which had so long held the Dublin workers depressed in filth and misery would at last reach the consciousness even of politicians. Captain Jack White, son of my old C.O. in Ladysmith, with battered head and blood-stained clothes, was leading a violent riot outside the Liberty Hall beside the Liffey quay the very hour that I arrived. Countess Markievicz, sister of the poet and pacifist Eva Gore-Booth, was in that hall, with impassioned gaiety distributing bread for relief. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, violent advocate of peace at any price, was proclaiming Woman Suffrage and succouring the wounded and the fallen. For two evenings I enjoyed the unusual honour of speaking on the same platform with James Connolly, George Russell ("Æ.") and George Lansbury. And when one morning on College Green I beheld a patient little donkey dragging a little coster cart surmounted by a huge barrel, round which were inscribed the words, "Mr. Henry Woodd Nevinson, the famous War Correspondent, will speak this night on 'Women and War,'" I felt that the pinnacle of glory had been climbed.

Hardly had I returned to London when I was sent back again to Belfast, owing to the reported mutiny of officers, or rather their threat of mutiny if ordered to employ force against the Ulster Volunteers or any other Protestant forces in Ulster. There was nothing much to be done in Belfast, and in the end I went back to England without gaining a great deal, though I had the advantage of listening on the boat to the wise counsel of Lord Monteagle, to whom Sir Horace Plunkett gave me an introduction.

So the weeks went past, still strangely full of omens and apprehension. When I called on Thomas Hardy in mid-April, he showed me a poem he had just written for the *Fortnightly*, representing the dead as hearing the big guns of the new Dreadnoughts and supposing them to sound the end of the world and the Last Judgment close at hand. A few days later came the news that a band of Ulstermen had occupied Larne and landed a whole German ship's cargo of arms (35,000 rifles and 3,000,000 cartridges), running them out through the country in motors so as to be ready for the coming conflict. Mr. Asquith solemnly in the House of Commons denounced the exploit as "a grave and unprecedented outrage"; but nothing was done. No effort was made to arrest or bring to trial the well-known culprits or their instigators, and Lord Northcliffe began expending treasure upon preparations for his correspondents in an Irish civil war.

I myself, with the advice and assistance of Professor Edward Browne, of Cambridge, was rather hesitatingly preparing for a prolonged journey through Armenia and Persia, but in leisure hours was contemplating with passionate admiration the superb display of our various troops in the Military Tournament of that spring. For never had our little army come so near perfection; men and horses superb in physique, training, and equipment. That was in May, and, in spite of vague forebodings, nearly the whole of June was occupied with the usual interests. We

entertained Marinetti, and listened to his fervid speech and recitations of his poems—the Italian Futurist declaiming in sharp contrast to the English manner of my son Richard, in those days the Futurist of London. One day I wrote a continuation of the “Alcestis,” then being performed at Bradfield, imagining what the feelings and language of Admetus’ wife were likely to be when, three days after her rescue from death, she was allowed to speak again and tell her husband what she thought of his conduct.¹ Another day I excited hostile comment in the papers by wondering in a public meeting why the King, among the other royal duties which he so worthily fulfilled, did not politely receive Mrs. Pankhurst as she politely requested. And on a third occasion I visited, with envious sympathy, that strange community which, apparelled in raiment of many colours, shook off the cares of this wicked world, and immersed their souls in quiet contemplation of “Higher Thoughts” among the wooded hills of Berkshire.

Suddenly, on June 28, came the flash of fire from Bosnia. Apparently with the foreknowledge, if not with the connivance, of the Servian Government, the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife were murdered at Serajevo. The actual assassins were members of the Servian secret (or nominally secret) society called the Black Hand, organised for the express purpose of breaking up the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. For a month the Rulers, the Foreign Ministers, and the Diplomats of the Great Powers were at work, some, like Sir Edward Grey, honestly endeavouring to avert the overwhelming disaster which their secret diplomacy had brought so near; some, perhaps honestly, endeavouring to “localise” the inevitable outbreak; others, for various reasons, partly dynastic, partly commercial, acquisitive, or personal, resolved that the conflagration should extend throughout Europe. Still the world of London went its accustomed way. As I still contemplated Persia,

¹ “The Return of Alcestis”: published in my *Lines of Life*, p. 61.

I attended a reception at the Persian Legation. My regular work for Massingham's *Nation* continued, and to the *Nation* lunch distinguished strangers came, such as was John Dillon, whom even then I described as a noble ghost from the past. It was, indeed, chiefly on Ireland that my thoughts and fears were bent. About July 22 the attempt at arrangement known as the Buckingham Palace Conference was on the point of breaking down, and on the 25th, when I went to Dulwich to say good-bye to my old Shrewsbury master, A. H. Gilkes, the only real teacher I ever had, then just retiring from the headmastership of Dulwich, held by him for more than twenty years with a success of which he thought little and never spoke—even then, though the danger of a violent breach between Austria and Servia had that very morning become imminent, I told him I thought my next sphere of employment would be in Ulster.

And in Ireland indeed it was. The very next day the Irish Volunteers ran a cargo of arms (2,500 rifles and 125,000 cartridges) ashore at Howth, the northern promontory of Dublin Bay, as the Ulster Volunteers had run the German cargo of arms ashore at Larne. But, as was to be expected, the Catholic Irish were very differently regarded by British authority from the Protestant rebels of the north. The police, assisted by British troops, attempted to seize the arms after the landing, and a rumour spread to Dublin that many of the Volunteers had been killed. A company of the K.O.S.B., returning to barracks in the city, were mobbed on the march, and, perhaps owing to a mistaken order, they turned and fired as they entered Bachelor's Walk close to O'Connell's bridge beside the Liffey. Three people were killed, and others wounded. Next day, the 27th, I crossed to Dublin again. But hardly had I arrived on the 28th and had just arranged our work with Hugh Martin, who was there also for the *Daily News*, when as I was writing my afternoon's despatch a telegram was handed to me: "Austria has

declared war on Servia. Return by to-night's mail." So back I went.

On the 29th the *Daily News* ordered me to Vienna, and I was willing enough to start. But I told the paper's authorities that it had become very doubtful if I should reach Vienna, and that the true centre of danger was now in Berlin. While they were hesitating and trying to get into touch with their regular correspondent in Vienna, I had my passport prepared for almost every country in Europe, and then retired into Berkshire to say good-bye to friends, and to the life and the England I had known so long.

On the evening of July 31 I started for Berlin. Down the midnight Channel the searchlights were turning and streaming in long, white wedges. Passing into Germany, we at once met trains full of working-men in horse-trucks decked with flowers, and scribbled over with chalk inscriptions : "*Nach Paris*," "*Nach Petersburg*," but none so far "*Nach London*." They were cheering and singing, as people always cheer and sing when war is coming. We were only six hours late in Berlin, but my luggage was lost in the chaos of crowds rushing home from their summer holidays, and I never recovered it, though in the middle of the war I received a postcard that had somehow arrived through Holland, telling me that the porter with whom I had left the *Schein*, or registration ticket, had found the luggage, and what should I like done with it ? A fine example of international honesty.

For two days I waited and watched. Up and down the wide road of "Unter den Linden" crowds paced incessantly by day and night, singing the German war songs : "*Was blasen die Trompeten ?*" which is the finest ; "*Deutschland, Deutschland, ueber Alles*," which comes next, and "*Die Wacht am Rhein*," which was the most popular, because most clearly defensive against the secular enemy. As I walked to and fro among the patriot crowd, I came to know many of the circling and returning faces by sight, and I still have

clearly in mind the face of one young working-woman who, with mouth that opened like a cavern, and with the rapt devotion of an ecstatic saint, was continuously chanting :

*Lieb Vaterland kann ruhig sein ! (bis.)
Fest steht und treu die Wacht,
Die Wacht am Rhein.*

So she passed me by. So the interminable crowds went past, a-tiptoe for war, because they had never known it. Sometimes a company of infantry, sometimes a squadron of horse went down the road westward, wearing the new grey uniforms in place of the familiar "Prussian blue." They passed to probable death amid cheering, handshaking, gifts of flowers and of food. Sometimes the Kaiser in full uniform swept along in his fine motor, the chauffeur clearing the way by perpetually sounding the four notes which wicked Socialists interpreted as saying, "*Das Volk bezahlt !*" (The People pays !). Cheered he was certainly, but everyone believed or knew that the Kaiser himself had never wished for war. He claimed the title of "Friedens-Kaiser," just as many have chosen to call our Edward VII "The Peace-Maker." The most mighty storm of cheering was reserved for the Crown Prince, known to be at variance with his father in longing to test his imagined genius on the field. Him the people cheered, for they had never known war.

On the morning of the fatal 4th, I drove to the Schloss where the Deputies of the Reichstag were gathered to hear the Kaiser's address. Refused permission to enter, I waited outside, and gathered only rumours of the speech that declared the unity of all Germany and all German parties in face of the common peril. A few hours later, in the Reichstag, the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, announced that under the plea of necessity the neutrality of Belgium had almost certainly already been violated. Then I knew that the long-dreaded moment had come. I went back to the

hotel to arrange for departure, if any chance of departure were offered. In the afternoon I heard that our Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, had demanded his papers, and war was declared.

Next morning all was quiet, and life seemed going on much as usual but for the excited crowds gathered round the newspaper offices, and the removal of all English and French names from the shops and banks. Even the sacred name of Cook was gone. In the evening, however, I received a kindly invitation from Sir Edward Goschen to come into the Embassy, which had been barricaded. As the Adlon was getting cleared for German officers, I gladly went, and was welcomed with amazing courtesy.

Before dawn on August 6, a string of motors was waiting outside the Embassy, sent by the Kaiser's orders to convey the Ambassador and his Staff to the station of Lebster, a few miles away from Berlin.

In crossing from the Hook to Harwich, we heard that Liège was holding out and upsetting the German calculations of time. But we also heard that our cruiser *Amphion* had been sunk by a mine, and seeing a sister cruiser with twenty destroyers chasing behind us, we were turned round to meet them, and under their escort reached the Harwich harbour. Many other formations of our fleet were visible for a few moments from time to time ; and so we beheld the first realities of the war which was to change the frontiers and the soul of the world. On the afternoon of that day (August 7, 1914) I was received with gratifying but unexpected welcome by the editor, A. G. Gardiner, the whole editorial staff, and especially by the reporters and printers of the *Daily News* in the hall of their office. I call it an unexpected welcome, since I was not conscious of any particular reason for such a rare display. I can only suppose that the profound emotion of the whole country had moved even Fleet Street to expression—to some outlet for its feelings, no matter what the occasion might be.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE EYE-WITNESS

APART FROM THE TORTURE of patriotic anxiety, the first few months of the war were spent by me in chafing uncertainty and consequent depression. Lord Kitchener had always detested war correspondents, holding them to be "the curse of modern armies," as Wolseley had described them in the first edition of his *Soldiers' Pocket Book*. The War Office, it is true, drew up a book of *Regulations for Press Correspondents*, in three parts, thirty-seven paragraphs, and six appendices. Major A. G. Stuart, of a Pathan Regiment, was appointed to organise us, and a better appointment could not have been made. For, though a stalwart Protestant from Ulster, he was indeed the "perfect gentle knight," gallant, courteous, sympathetic, and once a boy at my own school upon the Severn. He did all that man could do to assist us. He chose twelve out of our number with orders to hold ourselves ready to start the moment that Kitchener gave the word. He accompanied me personally to arrange our future mess, and even to hire a French cook for our service. He sent me the various orders as they issued from the War Office, and in strict obedience I purchased saddlery, camp-kit, and a horse, upon which for some weeks I desolately cantered up and down the riding tracks of Hampstead Heath. I engaged a servant from the staff of the *Daily News* office-boys, and when he went melancholy mad, I engaged another. Upon a counter-order I sold my horse at a profit of £2, and set about the purchase of a motor as instructed. Time after time it appeared certain that we should start.

Generals French and Joffre both agreed to our going. All was ready, but Kitchener remained immovable. It was an instance of that extraordinary man's main weakness. He could not depute authority, but, though overwhelmed beyond conception by the massive toil of the war, he must needs look into every detail for himself and would not trust the minor affairs of correspondents even to so entirely trustworthy a man as Stuart.

Even Major Stuart's patience was exhausted at last, and on the last day of the year he abandoned his task as hopeless and joined the G.H.Q. at St. Omer as one of the Intelligence Officers. In the meantime, even the most obedient of us, like myself, had in despair taken to dashing over to France or Belgium, running about there at perpetual risk of being arrested and shot, and running back to London with far more news than our papers were allowed to publish. On these distracting terms I was present at Boulogne in the middle of August, and watched those noble "Old Contemptibles" landing. They formed the finest army that ever left our shores, or perhaps any shores—the men trained to perfection, the equipment faultless, the horses beautiful with their shining coats, their large, intelligent, and patient eyes—men and horses so soon to be destroyed. There, too, I saw the coffin of General Grierson, the strategist, who had died suddenly in a train, embarked among a guard of French Territorials and two hundred of his own Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Two or three times I was in Calais, sometimes sleeping in the station, sometimes in the tiny garret of a shoemaker who befriended me. Once I saw a host of refugees from Belgium trailing through the town with the customary bundles of bedding, food, and birdcages, and with them went the King of the Belgians on his way to Rouen. Another day I entered the old church of Calais, which I had so often welcomed as the sign that again I was in France, and there I found a strange service being held. From each column of the central arches supporting the old

slated spire hung five tricolour flags. The choir was decorated with the Papal colours. The nave was crowded with old men and girls, who at regular intervals stretched out both arms crying in unison, "*Sauve la France ! Sauve la France !*" and so continued for the space of an hour.

At another time Geoffrey Young (famous mountaineer and Eton master of former days, a poet, too, and later in the war destined to win distinction and to lose a limb upon the Italian front)—he and I contrived to reach Dunkirk from Calais, very narrowly escaping the fate of three Germans, who, disguised as British officers, had been shot as spies just before we arrived. To the little city of Furnes, where Dr. Hector Munro had settled a hospital "unit" in a priests' college, I was driven out, and was at once set to work upon an ambulance that wandered through roads and level fields deeply pitted with shell-holes right up to the gates of Dixmude, which was flaming in several places, the bombardment being very severe (October 23). All the windows were broken, and the streets covered with shattered glass that crunched under our feet as we walked to the centre of the blazing town. Only dogs and goats were to be seen, searching in vain for their human friends. But Belgians still held the place, firing from the windows of the houses till the flames or shells drove them out. At the entrance of the town, near the bridge over the Yser, a private house had been converted into a dressing-station, and there the wounded were dragged in for the stanching of blood and the simple amputations, rapidly executed by two doctors, while two priests attended the dying.

Filling our ambulance cart with the due number of "cases," Lady Dorothy Feilding and I drove them back to Furnes, and in the long ward there, as we passed from one appalling sight of anguish to another, a nurse of some literary reputation said to me, "Would rulers make war if they saw this?" And I could only reply, "Yes, they would."

Next day I drove out with the ambulance to Westende to collect the wounded from the neighbouring little town of Nieuport, near the mouth of the Yser. The town itself was being destroyed too rapidly for entrance, and even its pleasant "seaside resort" was under heavy fire. Large shells came crashing through the roofs of its lodging-houses, and upset the billiard tables in the casino. The gentle esplanade was strewn with bodies of the dead, and into the *salon* of one hotel the wounded were being carried. The attack was answered by four six-inch guns emplaced in the golf-link bunkers, while four more were concealed among the birch trees of the public garden. The resort had provided itself with everything conducive to the restoration of health; but over the long line of salutary bathing-machines, huge cones of iron were flying at a thousand miles an hour, flung from a great black ship that crept along the coast—broad in the beam, almost oval in shape, almost flat-bottomed—accompanied by two or three gliding destroyers. Those black and slowly moving ships were extending even beyond the limit set by the sea, the grim line reaching to Switzerland along which the thunder of the guns never stopped by night or day. By day the line was marked by sudden white puffs like wool spurting flame or by vast splashes of black, and at night by flashes of yellow light, recurring faster than the eye can blink.

On my return to London, I found that the *Daily News*, for which I was then chiefly working, and even Massingham (editor of the *Nation*), considered an account of war, as it really is and always must be, too horrible for the country to bear, and I resolved not to go out again unless authorised by the War Office or engaged upon some definite and practical work. Geoffrey Young made the same resolve, and we offered our assistance to a Quaker Ambulance Unit which was then just starting, for we thought that our knowledge of the ground and of the British and Belgian authorities might be useful, as it was. When at last we reached

Dunkirk, we were set at once to work night and day among the rows of wounded lying on straw in the long railway shed beside the quay. Among them were a few wretched German prisoners, all severely wounded, and left untended to rot with suppurating, stinking, and gangrened wounds. In spite of their atrocious condition, so strong was national hatred at that time that the French and Belgian surgeons refused even to look at them, and treated us to all manner of satiric abuse because we cleansed and bandaged the suffering limbs of "the enemy," who to us had become merely men. The French authorities even threatened to send the whole Quaker Unit home if we persisted in our humanity. I have never known British soldiers behave as others then behaved to helpless and suffering opponents, nor can I imagine it.

But, with their usual silent, unyielding, and exasperating meekness, the Quakers established our footing. By the help of the British Consul, Mr. Sarell, and his wife, I engaged an empty hotel at Malo-les-Bains close to the town; and it served as headquarters till it was bombed much later in the war, after the Quakers had sent outposts all along the Belgian frontier and had extended a branch to the Italian front, with the assistance of Geoffrey Young and George Trevelyan, the historian. It was whilst arranging this settlement with the Consul that I was suddenly brought face to face with Lord Kitchener, who had come over to consult upon some detail such as he loved. I had seen Lord Kitchener often in the South African War; now I saw him for the last time. He was always gigantic, but now had grown much heavier—not protuberant, but massive all over. His face was a deep red, heavily embossed, and so swollen at the eyelids that the eyes almost disappeared. He strode through the entrance door without a word, as one conscious, as well he might be, of his great record and his vital importance to the country that trusted him, and would have trusted no one else so well; for his reputation was of more value than himself.

I was four or five times in Dunkirk with the Quaker

Unit and twice again got out to Ypres, watching its rapid ruin and the destruction of the Sacre Cœur hospital, where the Unit had been for a time established. Woesten and Boesinghe also I then came to know, and Dickebusch and the hill of Kemmel, against which the war was beginning to surge, and the more I saw of Quaker youth the more I admired it. But for the most part I was kept at home, speaking on the war, helping with drill, writing for the *Nation*, the *Daily News*, and *Votes for Women*, and otherwise eating my heart.

At last, in March 1915, the War Office decided to send out small parties of correspondents, and appointed officers, among them my friend Major Stuart, to lead us round the front. We were quartered at the G.H.Q. in St. Omer, close beside the finest ancient church in the town. Attached to the General Staff there, I found some whom I had known in various scenes before, such as Nevil Macready, who had been on Sir George White's Staff in Ladysmith, and was now Adjutant-General to Sir John French ; George Fowke, who as a young Captain in the Sappers had blown up the Boers' " Long Tom " on Gun Hill at Ladysmith and was now Engineer-in-Chief to the Expeditionary Force ; Maurice Baring, whom I had known in Russia during the troubles of 1905-1906, and who was now serving as interpreter and generally useful man on the aerodrome under Colonel Sykes ; Sidney Roland, once of Toynbee Hall, now working upon the germ of " spotted fever," which was prevalent at that time, and of which he afterwards died ; and there were a good many more, besides Philip Gibbs and others, who had been my colleagues in various lands.

But certainly the most remarkable man I met in those few days (for I saw Sir William Robertson, Chief of Staff, only in the distance) was Sir Henry Wilson, who had me to dinner in the " Liaison Department." I knew little about him at the time, but wrote of him that evening as :

"A very brilliant person, of wide international knowledge, said to have been the guiding spirit in all military diplomacy before the war ; oldish in appearance though not old ; thin, with a look of Mephisto ; thrusting out his head and shrivelled neck like a vulture as he talked ; entirely sceptical and cynical in mind, mocking at all human hopes and thought of ' progress ' ; rather theatrical in manner, but a man of genuine intellect. He evidently detests the present Government, and is said to have inspired the threatened army revolt about Ulster, for, like Stuart, who admires him immensely, he is an extreme Ulsterman. He talked a lot about the Balkans, which he knows at least as well as I do, and about politics and the war ; especially about the proposed expedition to the Dardanelles, to which I think he is strongly opposed. He suddenly asked me what I thought of a naval attack upon the Gallipoli peninsula, and I replied that, speaking as a mere layman, I could see no great advantage, unless troops were landed. ' You are right,' he answered ; ' a naval attack has never been of any use alone.' "

There was something so " dæmonic " about his personality that I remember the conversation very distinctly. But I never met him again, though seven years were to pass before two Irish Republicans shot him on his doorstep in London.

Up and down, from end to end of that French and Flemish land which Ralph Mottram and C. E. Montague have described so vividly in *The Spanish Farm* and *Rough Justice*, Stuart himself or one of the other notable officers conducted me. For the first time I looked over the widespread levels of fertility from the ancient town of Cassel, and for the first time I was in Bailleul, seeing its beautiful little square and the fifteenth-century town hall still untouched, whereas at the end of the war I found the whole town a heap of rubble and shattered rafters, not to be recognised but for a board painted with its name. And for the

first time I passed through Marlborough's Hazebrouck ; and again was delightfully welcomed by the Quaker youths who were trying to remain in Poperinghe and Ypres, already half ruined. And in a shady dell near Locre we saw the first shot fired from a vast 15-in. howitzer, called "Grandmother" (68 ton was the weight of the gun, 1,450 lbs. the weight of the shell, which flew seven miles on to the visible ridge called "Whitesheet"). And down the valley of the Lys we passed through Aire, Merville, and Armentières, and southward again to Bethune and the belfry of Beuvry from which the belfry of La Bassée was just visible, and the railways that made the deadly "Triangle." But to the neighbouring Neuve Chapelle we were not allowed to approach any nearer, though the guns were thundering there from the day of our arrival. For those were the days of the terrible slaughter, when, I believe, for the first time the method was tried of preparing for the infantry attack by a continuous barrage of shells in the hope—a vain hope—that sufficient gap might be cut in the German circle of "siege defence" to allow of a definite and permanent breach.

Early in April I heard proposals to send me to the Dardanelles to represent the *Manchester Guardian* and all the provincial papers combined, and I eagerly welcomed them. After many delays I started on the journey (July 4), late, but not too late for that gallant and tragic campaign. I found myself travelling out with the King's Messenger, Colonel Charles Burn, M.P., for Torquay, a fine type of the Tory gentleman, so polite, so alive to the obligations of inequality. We passed through Rome, and then were detained among the earthquake ruins of Messina, which showed that "Nature" can rival even mankind in violent and purposeless destruction. Thence to Athens, and so in a little launch past the island of Scyros, already sacred to Rupert Brooke, and to the sea between Imbros and Cape Helles, where one of the desultory battles of mid-July was

thundering in the vain attempt to penetrate the Turkish trenches drawn across the peninsula to bar our approach to the windmills of Krithia and the squat pyramid of Achi Baba Hill.

I was landed upon that island of Imbros, at the sandy part of Kephalos promontory, where Sir Ian Hamilton had pitched his Headquarter tents, removing from the H.G. ship *Arcadian* chiefly to avoid the German submarines which had arrived in May. He himself lived in a little wooden hut, connected by cable with Cape Helles, Anzac, and afterwards with Suvla Bay, so that from that point he could command all three positions. From no other situation was this possible. It is true that, in a destroyer, Suvla could be reached in less than an hour, and Helles in half the time, but I cannot doubt that absence from the actual scenes of conflict often embarrassed the General's plans, and was perpetual irritation to his personal feelings. For from the time of Majuba Hill, where his left hand was shattered, Sir Ian had always retained so much of the regimental officer's disposition that he felt restless and unsatisfied unless he were himself in the front line.

Having known him during the terrific engagement of Cæsar's Camp in Ladysmith (January 6, 1900) and at the fighting on Diamond Hill near Pretoria, I always regarded him as an example of the rare type which not merely conceals fear with success, as most Englishmen can, but actually does not feel it. From a mingled Highland and Irish descent he had inherited so-called Celtic qualities which the solid-bred Englishman contemplates with varying admiration and dislike. Undoubtedly he was deeply tinged with that "Celtic charm"—that glamour of mind and courtesy of behaviour which create suspicion among people endowed with neither. Through his nature ran a strain of the idealistic spirit which some despise as quixotic, and others salute as chivalrous, while both parties, with cautious solicitude, avoid it in themselves. Some of us were also aware that Sir Ian

was susceptible to the influence of beauty in other forms than those by common consent conceded to military men. We acknowledged him as a master of English prose, and though the English people read more in quantity than any other nation, the literary gift is regarded among us as a sign of probable incapacity, and not, as in France and ancient Greece, as an assurance of far-reaching powers. What was still worse, Sir Ian was known to have written poetry.

With me in our little camp was Lester Lawrence of Reuter's, a quietly courageous and reserved man, with whom in leisure moments I could discuss poetry, metaphysics, and the principles of government. And there, too, was Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, whom I had known six years before in Morocco, and again in Flanders at the beginning of this war. About him hung an atmosphere of magnificence that often astonished me, as when, among the rocks of that savage island, among the pigs and sheep that infested our camps searching for the last leaves and grapes of summer in a vineyard hard by, he would issue from his elaborately furnished tent dressed in a flowing robe of yellow silk shot with crimson, and call for breakfast as though the Carlton were still his corporeal home. Always careful of food and drink, he liked to have everything fine and highly civilised about him, both for his own sake and for the notable guests whom he loved to entertain. Yet in moments of crisis he could display an incalculable energy that carried him through days and nights of hardship, which he detested as he detested walking on foot and all routine. He might have made a good officer if he had been always in command, but being clever beyond question, he had a way of loudly criticising the conduct of campaigns with an assurance that sometimes secured excessive respect from all but the Commander-in-Chief. He was a vivid and industrious writer, and, for an impassioned card-player, he had read a good deal, especially of prose such as Gibbon's, much of whom he could repeat by heart, or shamelessly burlesque. Association from boyhood with

the rich and great had given him a proud self-confidence and a self-centred aspect of the world, but his scornful and often antagonising wit made him a difficult, though attractive, companion in a camp.

We were only three, for two other correspondents, who had come out with me, were obliged by sickness soon to return home. But we had frequent visits from the two Anzac correspondents, who were allowed dug-outs among their countrymen on the peninsula—Malcolm Ross, eminent as a mountaineer, with the New Zealanders, and C. F. W. Bean with the Australians, of whose actions during the war his writings are in evidence. And no one could be more capable of writing it, for his industry in collecting facts was inexhaustible, while his military judgment and his "eye for country" fitted him for a position as Chief-of-Staff, or even higher command. Always lavishly generous of his knowledge, and possessing a rare gift of instruction, he at once guided me through the complicated trenches at Helles, and over the still more difficult and confusing cliffs and valleys of Anzac. So it was that through his untiring assistance I rapidly gained a sufficient knowledge of the situation at both points of our attack.

One afternoon (July 19) as I was tramping the weary sands of Kephalos Bay back to our little camp, I met Sir Ian Hamilton riding to his Headquarters, which I had just left. He stopped and gave me various information about the troops and the situation, but added that he had in mind a great design which he so far kept secret even from his Corps Commanders. He referred to the coming prolonged struggle generally known as "Suvla Bay," though it should more appropriately be called "Sari Bair." For Sir Ian's design was to make the main attack upon the central Sari Bair range of mountains overlooking Anzac, supported on the left by the new reinforcements landed at Suvla Bay, while the VIIIth Corps at Helles detained the Turks in their impregnable trenches before Krithia and the hill of Achi Baba. If

the summits of the Sari Bair range could be reached and held by the Anzac Corps under Birdwood, the deadlock—almost a siege—at Helles and Anzac would be relieved, the Turks upon the Helles end of the peninsula would either have to go or be cut off. The combined forces from Suvla and Anzac could then descend to the Straits at Maidos, and the Narrows would be open to the fleet. It was an admirable design, defeated only by three unexpected impediments—the extreme complexity of the approaches to Sari Bair, almost impenetrable by a night attack ; the delaying inertia at Suvla ; and a mere mistake in time or command—the bombardment of the 6th Gurkhas and the 6th South Lancashires, apparently by our own guns, just as they had joyfully reached the summit of the range and were chasing the Turks down the reverse slope.

At intervals in July, three Divisions of reinforcements began to arrive—the 13th (Western), the 11th (Northern), and the 10th (Irish)—all formed from “ Kitchener’s Army,” and without experience of active service. They were variously disposed, some at Mityleni, some at Mudros, some at Helles and Anzac, but the greater number of the 11th Division in Imbros, where they spent a happy day or two swarming about the beaches and bathing in the shallows. Then in the evening of August 6 they were embarked for their unknown fate, being shipped upon destroyers, cruisers, and “ beetles ”—long, iron barges, built to transport five hundred men apiece, and having a swinging platform or drawbridge projecting from the prow so that it looked like a beetle’s forceps and antennæ. I myself climbed up the steep side of the *Minneapolis*, a liner which had been taken over with all her staff as a transport for mountain batteries and their teams. As an instance of petrifying routine I may recall that, when hoping to land at 4 a.m., I asked if I could get a cup of tea at that hour, I was haughtily informed : “ On this ship breakfast is always served at 8.30.” And later in the morning, when the whole movement was

at crisis, I observed the stewards sweeping out the gangways as they had swept for years. In the following spring, however, both breakfast and sweeping were disorganised when the *Minneapolis* was torpedoed between Egypt and Salonika.

That Friday-Saturday night, the sea was dead calm, and the darkness intense, for the waning moon did not rise till two o'clock. All the previous day we had heard heavy firing at Helles, where the struggle for "the Vineyard" was continuous; and still more terrific firing from Anzac, where "Lone Pine" and "the Neck" were being attacked with incredible gallantry and sacrifice. As we moved silently northward along the coast, unseen bodies of Australians, New Zealanders, and some English troops were, like four long snakes, attempting to steal unobserved up the water-courses towards the foot of the central range, which they were to storm next morning with our support. We had something over 25,000 men of all ranks, or say 20,000 rifles, to land, some on the steep beach just south of Nibrunesi Point, some near the centre of the bay, others (coming later) among the rocky promontories towards Suvla Point, the northern extremity.

So we moved slowly forward through the darkness, and when at last we anchored, I petitioned in vain to be taken ashore. It was quite right that the mountain batteries should be landed first, for there was only one field battery with the whole force, and guns were almost essential for the advance, but there was no reason why I should have been kept shut up in the ship all day, merely watching from a distance, without much understanding. When the first brown streak of dawn appeared, I began to discern the flat expanse of the Salt Lake, about a mile and a half across, and low dark hills on the further side, one of which was marked out by a broad "blaze" of yellow marl, shaped like a Turkish scimitar, from which it was afterwards to get its name. On the plateau beyond it stood the white minaret

of a village, which we came to know as Anafarta Sagir ; and high above village and hills rose the dark and formidable height of Kavak Tepe and Tekke Tepe, which looked to me about the height of the Wrekin, but were a few feet lower. Further to the left, the northern arm of the bay rose steep and rocky, and to the right, almost in line with Anafarta, stood a hill with waving crest, soon to be notorious as " W Hill "—the point that obviously ought to have been seized at once, for it commanded the approach to Anzac, where it was our part to give support. Close at hand, forming the southern arm of the bay, one saw a small dark hill called Lala Baba, just beyond which the main body of the 11th Division had been landed.

That was all I could make out till the sun began to rise, and then I perceived bodies of men crowding together upon the sand hills near the beach, obviously under shelter and resting at ease. They were, in fact, Sitwell's 34th Brigade, which, by General Stopford's special desire, had been landed inside the bay ; though " landed " is not the right word, for the " beetles " had gone aground, as any seaside child might have foreseen, and the men had leapt out into water almost up to their necks, and so had struggled to shore in great confusion.

Before the sun actually appeared, I saw straggling bodies of men making their way through the deep sand of the spit that separates the sea from the Salt Lake, except at one small issue, which can easily be waded over. They were coming from the small rocky hill of Lala Baba at the southern end of the bay, which had been taken at the bayonet's point in the darkness, and they were, in fact, part of the 32nd (Haggard's) Brigade, which had been ordered to join Sitwell's for the advanced march upon the Chocolate and " W " Hills. As light now made them visible, the few Turkish guns on the Anafarta plateau and " W Hill " opened fire upon them with shrapnel, and the numerous snipers hidden in the scrub on the north side of the Salt Lake found them

an easy mark. It was a terrible ordeal for young and partially trained soldiers who had never been under fire before, and were already much exhausted by want of sleep and food. Still they trudged on, and joined up with the other brigade. But Sitwell, who as senior officer now had the greater part of two brigades under his command, thought it impossible to move.

Except that a raging bush-fire, caused by our naval guns, burst out among the scrub to Sitwell's left, there ensued almost a dead pause till noon, when more and more men could be seen wallowing through the sand along that exposed spit. They were five battalions of Hill's Brigade coming from Mityleni and belonging to the 10th Division, but landed among the 11th on the south end of the bay instead of with their own division at the north end, where their Commanding Officer, Sir Bryan Mahon, was disembarking three battalions from Mudros. Helpless confusion and delay naturally resulted, and before Hill's battalions had reached Sitwell's position and formed up it was three o'clock. Then at last began the advance that should have been started and completed under cover of night. Many hours might have been saved if General Hammersley, under whose command Hill had placed himself owing to the mistake of his landing among the 11th Division, had ordered these five battalions to advance straight along the south side of the Salt Lake, where lay the direct approach to Chocolate Hill; and the going, though marshy, was better than through the sand. But Hill did advance at last, through a sudden and most welcome shower of rain, and, just as the sun set, four of his Irish battalions aided by two battalions of the 33rd (Maxwell's) Brigade, actually carried the entrenched position of Chocolate Hill by storm. It was something gained, but the whole day had been spent and the dominating points of Tekke Tepe and "W Hill" yet lay far in front. No support whatever was given to the Anzac troops, who had devoted the previous night and all that

day to fighting their way up the dry water-courses to the foot of the Sari Bair range, and at certain points had advanced some distance up the face of the mountain itself.

All that night I lay chafing on board, listening to the terrific firing at Anzac, but at dawn next day I was at last permitted to go ashore. It was Sunday, August 8—a day well deserving to be called Black Sunday, for after that day the ruin of the whole campaign was irretrievable, or at least was not retrieved. Landing on the north side of the bay near Suvla Point (Biyuk Kemikli), which is the extremity of the steep razor-edge called Karakol Dagħ, overlooking the gulf of Xeros, I turned south and made my way along the shore of the bay and that sandy spit which shuts in the Salt Lake, till I came to the captured hill of Lala Baba. Except for the continued firing at Anzac, all was quiet, desperately quiet. The peace of a seaside resort prevailed. and it was evident that the Turks had withdrawn their guns. Men were bathing in the shallows and running naked up and down the sands. Others were crowding round the water-lighters, some even cutting holes in the hose-pipes and letting the water run to waste when they had drunk their fill; others trying in vain to replenish the water-bottles which they had brought down from Chocolate Hill slung round their necks, a dozen together. For the anguish of thirst was intolerable, and up in the firing line some went mad under the increasing heat of the sun. The *Prah*, a ship fitted with all requisites for water supply and distribution, hung about at sea, obedient to a starchy regulation, and did not issue them till some days later. Even on the beach, where the water was running out from the pipes, men in despair filled their bottles from the sea. Perhaps rightly, General Stopford, commanding the whole Corps, ordered the mules for carrying water to the front to be disembarked before the artillery horses, though of all arms the guns were most needed. Owing to the confusion of the landing, brigades and even battalions were

hopelessly mixed together, and no one could be certain under whose command he stood.

Late in the afternoon, Sir Ian, full of apprehension at the silence, arrived in the bay, only to find his apprehension fully confirmed. General Stopford, apparently satisfied with what had been accomplished, informed him that nothing more could be done that day. Nothing more, when the whole success of the movement from Helles upwards depended upon the immediate occupation of those hills through which alone support to the advance from Anzac could be given ! At that very time, the Wellingtons and 7th Gloucesters had climbed the steep shoulder of Chunuk Bair ; the 4th Australian Brigade was advancing up the height of Koja Chemen Tepe by way of Abdul Rahman Bair ; and at Lone Pine the conflict still raged desperately. But from Suvla, instead of support, came only silence. In the words of Sir Ian's own despatch : " The one fatal error was inertia. And inertia prevailed."

Nearly distracted with impatience and disappointment, Sir Ian then took a step unusual in a Commander-in-Chief. He went in person to the Headquarters of the 11th (Hammersley's) Division and directly ordered that the 32nd Brigade, which was reported to be more or less concentrated somewhere out in front (no one knew exactly where), or any other force, even if it were only a company, should advance at once upon the high ground leading up to Tekke Tepe, without waiting for the morning attack. The Divisional General sent out the order, casually naming the 6th East York Pioneers to lead the advance, believing it to be the freshest and least tried. The order sped. It is doubtful at what hour it reached the 6th East Yorks ; apparently not till near dawn of next day. In any case it came too late. A fatal error had already been consummated.

The crash and rattle of firing from the foot of Sari Bair continued all night, for the main assault upon the heights from Anzac was in progress. At dawn (Monday, 9th) I

walked across the Salt Lake to Chocolate Hill, and remained there all day, hoping for some advance, but in vain. Perceiving the silence and inertia of the previous day, the Turks under the immediate command of Mustapha Kemal, now dictator of Turkey, had rushed up powerful reinforcements—at least three divisions—and replaced their guns on Anafarta Plateau, also increasing the number of guns. Our mixed brigades and battalions were struggling to make their way by sheep tracks through the thick and prickly bushes, crowded with snipers, at the foot of the plateau, and continuous attacks were made against that Scimitar Hill which had been so quietly and disastrously abandoned the night before. Presently fire broke out upon the hill itself, sweeping over the front and summit, consuming the dry bushes in sheets of flame. I could see the wounded, both British and Turk, creeping out on hands and knees to seek safety upon that “blaze.” But many perished from smoke and heat, and many were burnt alive, being unable to move. Here and there a party reached the summit, but they either fell or came rushing back. It was no wonder. The situation was indeed intolerable; and neither officers nor men of the New Army had ever known fighting before.

The great scheme of converging attacks from Helles, Anzac, and Suvla had failed, and for various reasons—accident or mischance, misjudgment of locality, and the complicated nature of the ground, making a night attack extremely problematic. But behind all obvious reasons of failure lay the ultimate cause that the troops employed, especially at Suvla, were not strong, not experienced enough for the task imposed upon them. Few in the New Army or the Territorial Divisions were acquainted with the realities of war, or had been exposed to its sudden and overwhelming perils. They had not the tradition, the veteran experience, the disciplined self-confidence of the Regular Army. And they had not the physique, the adventurous spirit, the national

bond of the Anzacs. What they might perhaps have done under decisive, youthful, and inspiring leadership can be judged from their subsequent service in later campaigns—such service as was performed in Palestine by these Territorial Divisions themselves. But in August 1915 their leadership was not decisive, youthful, or inspiring.

Something had been gained, though at a loss of 30,000 men upon all three fronts combined. The Vineyard at Helles and Lone Pine were held. The whole position at Anzac was far less constricted, and one could walk from Anzac to Suvla without much risk except from occasional snipers. At Suvla we held the wide plain round the Salt Lake, with at least two springs of good water, and it seemed likely that the bay would afford better harbourage for the ships in winter than the exposed inlet at Kephalos. It was something, but the commanding positions of Tekke Tepe, Scimitar Hill and "W Hill" were still in the enemy's hands, and Sir Ian resolved upon one more attempt to recover what was actually ours on the 8th, and might have remained ours but for errors and inertia. His plan was to bring round the relic of the famous 29th Division from Helles, and with them to attack Scimitar Hill in the centre, having the 11th Division on the right and the two Territorial Divisions on the left.

It was the afternoon of August 21, and the struggle began with the usual intense, but ineffectual bombardment from the ships in the bay. Then the indomitable division started its advance up the front of that fatal Scimitar Hill, already burnt black. From the front trench on Chocolate Hill I could watch their movement, at first through burnt bushes, and then up that bare and yellow "blaze." The 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers were leading, and they actually gained the summit, driving the Turks back towards Anafarta Sagir, and down the reverse slope. But there they were met by new lines of trenches, and I could see the Turks leaping on the parapets and pouring bullets upon the scattered line as it

advanced. At the same time numerous guns on the foot of Tekke Tepe and "W Hill" opened a heavy fire upon the summit, and this converging storm of shell and bullets became intolerable. Owing chiefly to loss of direction, the division on the right failed to support, and the Yeomanry Division (unmounted, of course) which had come up as reserve, became confused with the brigades on the right and centre, being further puzzled and distressed by renewed flames among the dry bushes. Still in the gathering obscurity at 7.30, I could see a crowd of khaki figures struggling up that all-too-familiar "blaze," and when darkness fell over them we all hoped the summit might have been won. But nothing could now live upon that terrible place which the 6th East Yorks had occupied without a blow a fortnight before. After a loss of 6,500 casualties, the divisions had to be withdrawn and reformed in their old trenches along the foot of the hills. So ended the last determined attempt to secure victory in the Dardanelles.

After the failure of this assault the army settled down into enforced inactivity, and the effect of inactivity upon an army, as upon civilians, is depression. Even the arrival of Major-General Fanshawe (to command the 11th Division), Major-General Stanley Maude, afterwards the hero of Bagdad (to command the 10th Division), and Major-General Sir Julian Byng (to command the IXth Corps) could not enliven the lethargy of disappointment. Monotony of food, scarcity of water, myriads of flies, and the consequent dysentery of perpetual diarrhoea increased the depression, and all looked forward with gloom to a winter campaign upon that exposed and desert promontory. About one-third of the whole force had been lost during August; and the sight of the graves, and of the mouldering bodies that could not be reached for burial, added sorrow which even the spectacle of hundreds of Turkish corpses flung down a ravine in the face of Chunuk Bair did not cheer. No further action was possible without reinforcements. General H. B. Walker

put the number required at 300,000 ; but the authorities upon the Western Front thought little of the Dardanelles, and refused to spare a man from their vast preparations for the prolonged failures of Loos and Champagne. During August the Russian armies were driven hopelessly back in Poland, and it was evident that Ferdinand of Bulgaria, like a fox between two packs of hounds, long hesitating which way to run, was now inclining to seek refuge among the Central Powers.

Calling upon Sir Ian in his headquarters at Imbros, I soon perceived that some great change was at hand. Owing to the rumours about Bulgaria's defection, it was easy to conjecture that he had in mind the proposed attempt to succour Servia by occupation of Salonika, and in fact the very next day he embarked the 10th Division. He also offered the 53rd. The French were sending a division (156) under that merry veteran, General Bailloud. When I spoke about preparations for the winter upon the peninsula, Sir Ian laughed and said, " Oh, we shan't be here in the winter." But he gave me a letter saying he would heartily welcome me back if I now went home on leave for five or six weeks, and so I parted from him (October 1). He had little more than a fortnight to remain. In answer to Lord Kitchener's telegram, he replied that such a step as evacuation was to him unthinkable. In any case it was impossible to estimate the losses involved, but they might come to 50 per cent. Thereupon Kitchener telegraphed that the War Council wished to make a change in the command, and had appointed Sir Charles Munro to supply a fresh unbiased opinion. On October 17, to the grief of the whole army and navy Sir Ian sailed in the cruiser *Chatham*, and left the peninsula which had been the dramatic stage of such high hopes, such noble achievements, such bitter and tragic frustration.

In spite of the general despondency, and the likelihood that more important action might soon be taking place in the Balkans which I knew so well, I now think I was wrong

in leaving the Dardanelles at that time. For I missed the new command ; I missed Kitchener's visit ; I missed the terrific blizzard of storm and snow at the end of November ; and I returned only just in time for the evacuation. However, I went back to the *Aragon* at Mudros again, in company with Ashmead-Bartlett, who was sent home by Sir Ian's Staff for attempting to get a strongly hostile criticism of the campaign through to Mr. Asquith without submitting it to the official censor. As usual, he had made no secret of that secret missive, but had read it aloud to various officers and correspondents, one of whom gave information about it to the Chief of Staff, so that the Australian who was carrying the manuscript was arrested on arriving at Marseilles, and the document was found on him. It might be argued that a correspondent is justified in breaking his pledged word for what he considers the highest interests of the country, but there is no question that the man who is discovered doing it has to go.¹

On my birthday, October 11, I was in London again, and soon after had a long conversation with Sir Ian, who told me of his interview with Kitchener, and rightly insisted that he would rather have been recalled than obliged to sacrifice the British reputation and a vast proportion of his army—he put it between three-quarters and one half—by withdrawing from the peninsula. In a public meeting at the Portman Rooms I also had the opportunity of explaining why, in my opinion, it was already too late to save Serbia, as Bulgaria had now entered the war against us and had in fact that day occupied Uskub. None the less, at a large gathering in Manchester of the big provincial editors, it was decided, rather against my wish and judgment, to send me now to Salonika instead of back to Gallipoli, and by the end of the month I was in Paris with Robert Dell, friend of Anatole France, and at that time the famous Paris correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*—a man of great knowledge, and

¹ For Ashmead-Bartlett's own defence of his action see his book, *The Uncensored Dardanelles* (1928).

possessing an extraordinary flair for information, upon which he based forecasts seldom fulfilled.

In Athens I had a long conversation with Venizelos, who was then at desperate enmity with King Constantine, and had been compelled to resign early in October, though supported in his pro-Allies and pro-Servian policy by a great majority of the Greek Chamber. The King, who could not believe that the German army, in which he had been trained, or the Kaiser, whose sister he had married, could ever be defeated, had dissolved the Chamber against all constitutional right. But Venizelos was guided by two main principles—one, that honour demanded the observance of the 1913 treaty to assist Serbia in her distress, and the other that England in every war always wins one battle—the last.

Throughout our conversation Venizelos displayed great nervousness, trembling with passion, raising his voice almost to a scream or a whine, and at times almost bursting into tears. That was the Greek manner, to which I had long been accustomed, for Greeks had never been drilled as we are to restrain the expression of emotion till the emotion itself almost dies of atrophy. But in those days Venizelos had certainly good cause for agitation, seeing as he did the whole fabric of his labours for his country falling to pieces at the touch of a dubious and inconstant ruler.

After I had been absorbed for three weeks in Salonikan ineptitude, a longing to return to the open air and definite warfare of the Dardanelles seized me. Or perhaps it was an instinctive premonition that something vital was about to happen there. On December 7 I was back in Imbros again, and in the new headquarters close to our old camp I found General Birdwood, now in command of "The Dardanelles Army," as General Sir Charles Monro had named it as distinguished from "The Salonika Army," when he took over the command of all Mediterranean forces east of Malta, except Egypt. Kitchener had come out strongly opposed to

evacuation, for he rightly regarded the Dardanelles Army as a perpetual thorn in the side of Turkey even if it advanced no further ; but he had been won over by Monro's report and the persuasion of Staff officers upon the *Aragon*, one of whom proudly boasted to me that, "We soon brought Kitchener round to our way of thinking." Indeed, on the very first morning (December 8) that I awoke, enraptured by the mountain air surrounding the lonely cottage into which I had forced an entrance, the fatal decree went out, and Birdwood was ordered to prepare for the evacuation of Anzac and Suvla.

To bring away an army from open beaches fully exposed to the enemy has always been recognised as one of the most difficult of military operations. On this occasion the probable loss of men was estimated by some at 50 per cent, and by none at less than 15 per cent. Yet by unexampled skill Birdwood, right by night and bit by bit, brought away the men, guns, morses, mules and most of the supply without the loss of a single man. No man, horse, mule, or gun of the two Army Corps was left behind, and the task was accomplished in eleven days.

From that Christmastide, 1915, when I had to leave the Dardanelles, I must go back a few weeks to November 14, when I first landed at Salonika. First, that is to say, on this campaign, for I had been there twelve years before with the Brailsfords when we were trying to rescue wretched Macedonians from Turkish abomination. In 1915 the fire that consumed half Salonika still lay some months ahead, and from the deep water along the marble quay the beautiful city rose complete up the steep hillside to the limit of her ancient walls, beyond which extended the wild and empty country, traversed by mountain tracks to distant villages. The three ancient churches—St. Sophia, St. George, and the splendid St. Dimitrius (since destroyed by fire)—which I before knew as mosques, had lately been restored to the Orthodox Church, and the whole city was Greek again. But

apart from the European houses along the waterside, the character of the place was Turkish still.

Exactly opposite the city across the purple bay rises Mount Olympus, glittering with snow or wrapt in films of mist. South-west stands Pelion, and the gap between the two sacred mountains is the sacred Vale of Tempe. North-west, beyond the malarial marshes of the Vardar, one looks to distant snowy mountains on the way to Lake Ostrovo, Flórina, and Monastir. Upon the almost landlocked harbour itself there lay a chaos of ships—middle-aged battleships, cruisers, one of our big monitors, French vessels piled high with lumbering armament, a Russian craft with five thin funnels in a row (inevitably called the *Woodbine* by our men from the five cigarettes in a Woodbine packet), destroyers, torpedo-boats, transports with men or supplies, fairy-like hospital ships, and the usual swarm of Greek sailing boats lashed to the quay.

Was ever such a situation? Venizelos as Prime Minister had invited us to save Serbia, but now King Constantine had dismissed him, reversed his policy, and declared the Greek kingdom strictly neutral, though "friendly to the Allies"; friendly because he feared a British blockade, since any fleet could starve his country. So there the army stood, on neutral ground, surrounded by a far more numerous Greek army, dissembling hospitality and ready to spring upon us at any moment; while our declared enemies from Austria and Germany pursued espionage unchecked, and German and Bulgarian forces were gradually creeping down upon our northern front, some towards Monastir, others as though to assault Salonika herself by way of Lake Doiran and Gevghele. Heavy snow was beginning to fall.

It was a position to puzzle a general of genius, and Sarraïl, with whom the supreme command rested, was not that. His first intention had been to get in touch with the portion of the Servian Army still at Veles (Kuprili) far up the Vardar, but the day before I arrived that poor relic had been forced

to begin its miserable retreat through Albania to the Adriatic, and all hope of rescuing "gallant little Serbia" was at an end. What was there left to do? Sarraïl sat in his suburban villa south of the city, and every day I went to admire his stalwart person, his large bronzed face with blue eyes, grey moustache and grizzled hair all on end, his rapid but indistinct language, and his familiar jests, verging upon buffoonery. But he told us nothing. *La neige ! La neige !* That was all. Perhaps there was nothing more to say. And the British G.H.Q., under Sir Bryan Mahon, informed me desperately they really did not know why we were there or what we were going to attempt. I found the brigades of the newly arriving 22nd Division spread out along the road to Monastir, but entirely ignorant of any purpose, and the old 10th Division was lost to sight beyond Lake Doiran. To add to my personal perplexities I had to submit my telegrams, first to a pernicky Intelligence Officer in the British G.H.Q., and then to a Greek censor, who lost himself here or there and demanded a French translation.

Sir Bryan Mahon invited me to accompany him up to his British line, which was linked up with the French right, and on November 24 to 26 I was with the Irish brigades in the mountains. The very next day that blizzard raged which fell like a scourge upon the armies still exposed on the Dardanelles peninsula. On December 7 the Bulgars crossed the Bojima valley just in front of our lines and stormed up the rocky hills. A few days later our division was ordered to retire in conformity with the French. In some confusion on the night of the 11-12, the last of the Irish brigades was withdrawn through Doiran to the railway, and the Bulgars did not attempt to cross the Greek frontier. The main positions for the defence of Salonika were then gradually organised along the fifty-mile front from the Vardar to the Gulf of Orfano near Stavros, right across the base of the three-pronged peninsula that ancient Greeks called Chalcidice. Our part of the line included the two lakes of Langaza

and Beshik, and so it remained for some months, gradually getting entrenched, and further protected by a few outlying positions in front along the road to Seres. Salonika was thus converted into a fortified camp, open only on the side of its gulf, and, as anyone who knew the Balkans could have foretold, Servia ceased to exist.

Month after month I was detained in that beautiful and harassed city as a spectator of the tragi-comedy. But early in February I contrived to secure a pass upon a little railway line up to Flórîna, familiar to me in the wild but calmer days of twelve years before. Coiling round the northern end of desolate Lake Ostrovo, and passing desolate Sorovitch, where once I had started for a fine journey over mountains to Castoria, I reached Flórîna, folded between its hills, having accomplished a hundred miles in twelve hours from Salonika. There I was much interested in the Archbishop, who descanted upon the services rendered to the Greek language by St. Chrysostom and St. Gregory, and in the Greek Prefect or Mayor, who had been educated at Leipzig and was strongly pro-German, but almost changed his faith when he discovered that I, a mere Englishman, had heard of Protagoras, whom he had, rather strangely, taken as his master in wisdom. But I did not come to converse on language or philosophy. I came to get as near to Monastir as I could, since it had been occupied by Bulgars at the end of November. If ever one race more than another had a right to a town in the Balkans, it was the Bulgars who had a right to Monastir. But when I struggled out through the slush to the utmost frontier village and far into the neutral zone towards a white bridge where the first Bulgar post was stationed, the sentries appeared ignorant of my sympathies, for they trained a machine-gun on me, and after enjoying one last brief glimpse of the familiar town, I was obliged to withdraw without explanation. Whereas the Austrian Consul of Monastir drove past me and crossed the frontier unchallenged, as he did twice a week, bearing what news of

the Allied forces and intentions he had gathered on the "neutral" soil. Behind his carriage a fine lady in black hat and habit defiantly rode astride. Was it all a tragedy or a comic opera?

The tedium of those many weeks in Salonika was certainly much relieved by association with a finely confused diversity of interesting people. One day when I was taking morning coffee, and marvelling at the series of lies called the *Balkan News*, in Floca's restaurant, I saw a bearded man in naval uniform shyly enter and advance with the modest self-consciousness of a don going up Hall at dinner-time. The nervous politeness with which he ordered coffee, as though apologising to the waiter, not merely for his hunger but for his very existence upon earth, told me that he must be a man of exceptional culture, and as I looked at him from time to time, I said to myself: "It is not the uniform that makes the sailor. John Masefield isn't much like a jolly Jack Tar to look at, but he looks it more than you." And then, by some unconscious association, a vision of the Parthenon rose in my mind. Yes! of a happy day on the Parthenon twenty years before! And of this sailor-man showing me round and explaining all, with an enthusiasm equal to my own, though all was new to me and to him familiar! I was right. The sailor-man was Ernest Gardner, master of the Hellenic knowledge that is one of the few kinds of ancient knowledge worth a life's devotion. His knowledge of modern Greek also had given him the post of liaison officer and interpreter of Greek papers and "neutral" propaganda. Why he had been rigged out in naval uniform I could not say, but to me he came like a joyful morning, and many a fine walk and ride we had together, though, to be sure, his riding was the only genuinely sailor-like thing about him, and all the time he kept addressing cautionary restraints to his horse with the utmost politeness.

Early in March I was ordered home, touching at Egypt on the way. After the usual risky voyage through the Greek

islands, keeping on the surface we made Port Said, and I journeyed straight to Suez, where I found Miss Edith Durham, working with the Y.M.C.A.—a strange alliance. From Port Tewfik I crossed to the Quarantine Station, and rode to a point where a Patiala section of the Indian Imperial Service Corps was dragging out a monotonous existence, the wretched men complaining that for eighteen months they had done nothing but dig trenches up and down the Canal, and the trenches were filled up with sand as soon as dug. Thence I rode on to a strong outpost the Gurkhas had constructed on the Oyun Moussa (Moses' Well), where water bubbles up from the very top of two low hills (about forty feet high) and forms pools on the summit. Like all miracles, it is difficult to explain. In the desert beyond I found a still stronger outpost, and next day I went some distance up the Canal to Shaluffah, Headquarters of my old Dardanelles friends, the 42nd Division. Riding out some miles into the desert I came to "Manchester-on-Sands," where lengths of trenches, dug within the last three weeks by those Lancashire men, were now filled with sand to the brim, and a black sand-storm was tormenting the pitmen, mill-hands, and clerks in their outposts of "Oldham," "Wigan," "Accrington," and other fond memorials of towns in which only the offspring of such places can find cause for affection. Equally fortunate, however, with the beneficiaries of miracles, they received water for drinking, though not for washing, through pipes run under the Canal from the "Sweet Water Canal" in Egypt.

Soon afterwards I went up to the Correspondents' Camp among the palm groves of Ismailia, where I found Bean, Ross, and Lawrence, and with them William Massey, whom I had known as a red-hot supporter of Ulster in the "Covenant" days. Now I saw him firmly attached to the Egyptian campaign, patiently waiting in the vague hope that something might some day happen. And if ever patience was rewarded it was his. For two years later he was able, I think

alone of correspondents, to accompany Allenby on the victorious advance to Jerusalem and the actual Armageddon, as his excellent books upon the whole campaign have since testified. There, too, I had the enjoyment of meeting Aubrey Herbert again, and he told me of a scheme he had laid before Sir Edward Grey for sending Miss Durham, me, and himself through Albania to report, with a view to securing the country's independence under the protection of Italy—a remarkable anticipation of what in 1927 we saw actually happening, though at the time the scheme faded away.

I called at General Headquarters in an empty monastery on the bank of the Canal, and was received by Sir Archibald Murray, then commanding the "Canal Sphere," while Sir John Maxwell commanded in Egypt—a peculiar separation of duties, and yet one that perhaps should have been continued; for the removal of Sir Archibald's Headquarters to Cairo appears to have profited little. He had been one of my Censors during the Ladysmith siege, and so received me graciously "for old time's sake," as he said, and explained at length his present scheme of defences by advancing short railways to points out in the desert, flooding the northern part except for the roads, and moving a large force forward by railway in the north to hold the well-watered villages where the Turks might concentrate 80,000 men as a base for attack. Thus he would leave the desert beyond as our real defence instead of making the vulnerable Canal its own defence, as had hitherto been done. He also spoke freely on the Salonika campaign, admitting the possible service of detaining some of the Germans there away from the front in France, but strongly criticising Sarraïl's wild idea of fighting his way up through the mountains to the Danube. Perhaps General Murray was too reserved, too quiet, and "gentlemanly" for the task then laid upon him. I cannot say. But I was deeply grieved when, just a year after my visit in Ismailia, his forces failed twice at Gaza, and he was superseded by Allenby. It is

not enough remembered that it was Murray who laid the plan of advance, and constructed the railway from El Cantara to the frontiers of Palestine—that line of “The Milk-and-Honey Express” which was the ultimate instrument of victory. Yet he failed of victory just when it seemed in his hands.

CHAPTER XXVI

IRISH PATRIOTS

AFTER MY RETURN from the Dardanelles, Salonika, and Egypt, I had to endure nearly two years of mere illness, intensified at intervals by long periods of extreme pain. It is useless to record physical misery, but I may say something about the mental misery that was almost immediately added. For while I was living for a few days in what was then an almost unknown village among the Chiltern hills, I suddenly received the news of Easter Week in Dublin (1916), and the arrest of my friend Roger Casement on the coast of Kerry, not far from Tralee. Unable to go to Ireland myself, I could only learn from the papers how the rising was suppressed, and many of my Irish friends executed.

As John Dillon, already in those days a veteran, and certainly no supporter of the Rising, wrote in a letter at the time, incalculable mischief was done by those Dublin executions, in that "they poisoned the minds of the Irish people against the Government of England." No doubt that wise old patriot was right, though I should have thought no extra poison was needed, and throughout those days my most intimate enemies at home kept pouring in upon me the savage hope that all my friends would not only be shot or hanged but drawn and quartered one by one. Among the friends who escaped with life, though sentenced to death, were John MacNeill, the well-known Irish scholar, and the Countess Markievicz.

Of those who were executed in succession I knew best James Connolly. He was indeed a wise and remarkable man. Perhaps owing to his upbringing in Ulster, Edinburgh, and

England, or to his seven years' residence in America, he possessed a broader and more definite view of life than was common among the Irish patriots. On the platform he was never windy, cloudy or doctrinaire. He never lost himself, or lost time in those abstract discussions that weary the soul at most Socialist meetings. Whether he was speaking on the wrongs of the working people, the wrongs of women (a favourite subject with him), or the wrongs of Ireland, sentence after sentence came out clear and sharp, always striking immediate points in the actual daily life of the people.

His hatred of theory and talk drove him to take the lead in the Rising of Easter Week, but he had no illusions about the result. He never thought for a moment that some 700 Irish Volunteers and Citizen-Army men would prevail against the regular Army and Navy of England. "We are marching out to be slaughtered," he said to William O'Brien, the Labour leader as he parted from him on the steps of Liberty Hall. "Personally I have no fears or regrets, I have had a full life, and wouldn't ask for a better end to it." So, with a grim and taciturn joy, he carried on the hopeless battle from day to day, until, twice wounded, he fell into English hands. Decent and civilised people no longer kill the wounded; they no longer shoot their prisoners. But towards Connolly no decency or civilised treatment was shown. He was nursed till he was well enough for killing, though one of his wounds was gangrened. Then, on May 12, he was lifted from a stretcher into a chair, his hands bound behind him, his head falling on one side through weakness, and they shot him at dawn in Kilmainham gaol. What high service he might have rendered to his country and to mine if he had but lived, I can only conjecture.

Far different in method and temperament was another victim of the Rising. Francis Sheehy Skeffington was, I suppose, the only genuine pacifist in Ireland. In dress, in manner, in opinion, in advocacy of Women's Suffrage, and above all

in pacifism, he seemed to court unpopularity. Yet I never met anyone, man or woman, by whom he was not beloved. I suppose it was his immovable sincerity and unselfishness that gained him invariable affection. Everyone might have foreseen that when the Rising began he would go about, like Falkland, "ingeminating peace," and in the very thick of the conflict he ingeminated it.

But in the midst of such vain appeals he was seized by the English and imprisoned in Portobello barracks. There he was murdered one morning by the order of an English officer, who sought to expiate the atrocious crime by praying over his victim just before the sentence was carried out. Ultimately that officer was tried and condemned for murder, but reprieved on the ground of insanity. Whether his reputed madness was religious or homicidal, I never heard for certain. I only know that Skeffington's widow together with their little son, was shamefully attacked in her own house by English soldiers, and has remained the implacable enemy of our country. Indeed her treatment was not calculated to placate. Yet she was sister by marriage to Tom Kettle, one of the most constructive as well as the most eloquent of the Irish leaders of the time, and he had died in France fighting side by side with the English troops "for the rights of small nationalities," a phrase which others than the Irish in those days found persuasive.

Roger Casement, with whom I had been more closely acquainted than with Connolly or Skeffington, was an Irishman of a type different from either. A man of very handsome appearance and attractive personality, born of a Protestant father and a Catholic mother in the county of Dublin, he was fifty-one at the time of the Rising, and had behind him a record of noble service to mankind in some of the most inhuman regions of the world. After serving at two places in South America (Santos and Para), he was appointed Consul-General at Rio Janeiro, in 1908, and for the year 1910 was sent by Sir Edward Grey, then Foreign Secretary,

to investigate the horrible conditions of rubber collection upon the Putumayo, as narrated in *The Devil's Paradise*, by two American travellers, W. E. Hardenberg and W. B. Perkins, in 1909. His report upon the methods of rubber collection in that region is the most appalling revelation of human abomination known to me, though I have witnessed much abomination myself, and have read the records of the Congo Reform Association, of which Lord Cromer was chairman. If anyone still doubts the doctrine of original sin, or believes mankind to have been created only a little lower than the angels, let him study the Blue Book containing Casement's own summary, and the detailed evidence of the witnesses.

In consequence of the Casement Report, an enquiry was instituted before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Charles Roberts, at that time M.P. for Lincoln, an investigator of undisputed acumen and integrity. The Report of that Select Committee included paragraphs afterwards sent out as a "Circular Despatch to His Majesty's Consular Officers respecting the Employment of Native Labour."

Casement, as Bernard Shaw insisted in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, was hanged as being a nationalist Irishman, and that was a charge he would never have denied. He had returned to Ireland and subsequently retired from the Consular Service just when the spirit of rebellion was being actively fomented in Ulster by Sir Edward Carson and Mr. F. E. Smith. Every preparation for violent rebellion had been made or was making. The Covenant had been signed in Belfast; the two leaders just mentioned had reviewed a military procession at Portadown; the Ulster Volunteers were formed, and were openly drilling; cargoes of arms had been received from Germany; resolutions to welcome the Kaiser rather than Home Rule were freely and publicly expressed. Casement was full of contempt for "Carson's circus," as he called it to me, but

these examples of rebellion worked upon his mind. At the time of the Putumayo enquiry in the House of Commons he seemed to me failing in health. The doctors suspected the beginning of a spinal disease, and when he set out to visit his brother in South Africa, I hardly expected to see him again. The Karoo restored his health to some extent, unfortunately for himself, and he threw himself into the organisation of the Irish Volunteers, whether with the object of defending Southern Ireland against the Ulster rebels, or, by a wilder scheme, of uniting with them in a joint defiance of England, I am not sure. But it was in the hope of raising money for the Irish Volunteers that he went to America early in 1914.

In October of the same year he sailed for Norway, and later contrived to cross to Germany, where he hoped to organise an Irish Brigade, such as was formed to fight for France after the expulsion of James II from Ireland ; and such as was again formed to fight for the Boers in the South African War. By these methods he hoped, rather vaguely, as I think, either to strike a blow, however feeble, at the country which he regarded as the secular oppressor of his own, or, if the Germans were successful in the war, to gain for Ireland favourable terms, favourable treatment, or even complete independence.

For Casement himself, the long months of his residence in Germany were a period of extreme distress and dubitation. As was natural, he found himself distrusted on all sides. The idea of an Irish Brigade was a failure. The Germans regarded him with suspicion as a spy, or with indifference as an idealist. He was almost deadly sick in body, and tormented by uncertainty. He went from Berlin to Munich, and back again, to various prison camps, and various "cures." He came to regard England's ultimate victory as assured by her command of the sea.

When he came to hear that a rising was to be attempted in Easter Week, he resolved to reach Ireland if possible,

though well aware of the doom that awaited him. So he set out in a German submarine, apparently accompanied by a small steamer, the *Aud*, flying the Norwegian flag, and containing guns and a handful of men. The men were twenty German sailors with three officers, the guns were Russian rifles of 1905 pattern, and probably useless. They were recovered by divers after the ship had been stopped by the sloop *Bluebell*, about 90 miles from the south-west coast of Ireland, compelled to follow to Queenstown (138 miles), and sunk by her own crew, who were taken prisoners. That was on Saturday, April 22. Casement himself had landed on the open coast near Tralee, and walked to an old fort near Ardfert, where he was found (April 21) and arrested.

During my last interview with him in Brixton gaol, Casement told me himself that his object in coming to Ireland at that time was to tell his friends not to attempt the Rising, for it was useless to expect any adequate help from the Germans, and he knew that the guns and handful of men on the *Aud* were sent almost in mockery. Of course, if the Rising broke out in spite of his advice Casement was ready to join in it, but he would have first joined with Professor John MacNeill in his attempt to countermand it. In a statement issued on the day after the execution, the Government, in defence of their action as against the very numerous and influential appeals for reprieve, asserted that "the suggestion that Casement left Germany for the purpose of trying to stop the Irish Rising was not raised at the trial, and is conclusively disproved, not only by the facts there disclosed but by further evidence which has since become available." Any Irishman could understand Casement's reasons for not raising the plea at the trial, but what the further evidence available may have been, I cannot conjecture.

My friend was taken first to the Tower of London, where he was treated with gross indignity, and was then transferred to Brixton gaol, where he asked that I might be allowed to

visit him on June 20, a few days before his trial began.

I was to see him twice again, though never to speak with him. The trial, which was what is termed a "Trial at Bar," began on June 26, and lasted four days. Casement's leading counsel was Mr. Alexander Sullivan, Second Serjeant at the Irish Bar, and also a barrister of the English Bar. His second counsel was Mr. Thomas Artemus Jones ; and John Hartman Morgan, Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of London, was admitted by the Lord Chief Justice to act as *amicus curiæ*. The prosecution was undertaken by Sir Frederick Smith, who, as Attorney-General, appointed himself; and was, no doubt, greatly assisted by his knowledge of rebellion acquired during the threatened "Rebellion of Ulster," in which he had played so prominent a part five and four years earlier.

The Court of King's Bench was presided over by the Lord Chief Justice (Lord Reading), with Mr. Justice Avory and Mr. Justice Horridge as his colleagues, and the trial was held in the Law Courts of London. The procedure followed the antiquated custom, exemplified in the case of *The King v. Lynch*, thirteen years before, when Mr. Arthur Lynch was condemned to death for treason in assisting the Boers in the South African War, but after a brief term of imprisonment was released and sat as a Member of Parliament. The Usher of the Court cried, "Oyez," the King's Coroner stated the charge of "High Treason, by adhering to the King's enemies elsewhere than in the King's Realm—to wit, in the Empire of Germany—contrary to the Treason Act, 1351, 25 Edward III, statute 5, chapter 2," and Sir F. E. Smith stated his case and called the witnesses for the prosecution. Mr. Sullivan then, no doubt quite rightly, moved to quash the indictment on the ground of misinterpretation of a clause in the Statute of Edward III :

"It shall be treason if a man do levy war against our Lord the King in his realm, or be adherent to the King's enemies

in his realm, giving to them aid and comfort in the realm or elsewhere."

The real defence was an appeal to a principle outside the law, and, as I think, above the law. It was stated first by Mr. Sullivan in his speech for the defence :

" Sir Roger Casement was not in the service of England. He was in the service of the United Kingdom ; he was in the service of His Majesty in respect of the whole Empire of His Majesty's dominion. In Ireland, you have not only a separate people, you have a separate country. An Irishman's loyalty is loyalty to Ireland, and it would be a very sorry day for the Empire when loyalty to one's own native land should be deemed to be treason in a sister country."

On a secondary point, suggesting that fear of an Ulster invasion rendered a volunteer force essential for the preservation of life in Southern Ireland, Mr. Sullivan described the condition of the country in sentences that must have appealed strangely to the prosecuting Attorney-General himself :

" Observe the state of affairs as you have found it proved in evidence," he said. " There was in the north of Ireland an armed body of men ostensibly marching about in Belfast deliberately originated with the avowed object of resisting the operation of an Act of Parliament which had the approval of the rest of the country. They armed, and nothing was said to them ; they marched and countermarched ; the authorities stood by and looked at them. The police were powerless. They had great forces behind them, great names, and men of high position."

Yes, the rebels of Ulster had behind them great names and men of high position. No one in Court had any difficulty in remembering one great name, one man of high position.

At the end of the third day, Mr. Sullivan broke down with excitement and fatigue. The defence was continued by Mr. Artemus Jones and Professor Morgan. Then followed the closing speech for the Crown, and I well remember the peculiarly affected Oxford accent with which the Attorney-General concluded his demand for the verdict of guilty, in the words : " If you should come to the conclusion that the Crown has proved its case, however painful the duty, it is one from which you cannot, and you dare not, shrink. I have discharged my responsibility in this case ; do you discharge yours."

Lord Reading then summed up. When the jury returned after an hour's deliberation, no one doubted the verdict. When asked by the King's Coroner " what he had to say for himself why the Court should not pass sentence and judgment upon him to die according to law," Casement began by denying the jurisdiction of an English Court, and appealing from the Court to his own countrymen, went on to attack the English leaders who had gone over to Ulster with the object of stirring up civil war there for their own party purposes in England. Having described the tactics and the incitements of such persons, he continued :

" The difference between us was that the Unionist champions chose a path they felt would lead to the Woolsack ; while I went a road I knew must lead to the dock. And the event proves we were both right. The difference between us was that my ' treason ' was based on a ruthless sincerity that forced me to attempt in time and season to carry out in action what I said in word, whereas their treason lay in verbal incitements that they knew need never be made good in their bodies. And so, I am prouder to stand here to-day in the traitor's dock to answer this impeachment than to fill the place of my right honourable accusers."

With a kindly word to the jury, thanking them for their verdict, and assuring them that he made no imputation

upon their truthfulness and integrity, he concluded. Looking to the judges, I saw that clerks had put soft black things, like battered college-caps upon the head of each, and I heard the usher command silence while sentence of death was passed.

An appeal was heard in the Court of Criminal Appeal in London, on July 17 before five judges, with Mr. Justice Darling presiding. The Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General (Sir George Cave) were present, but were not called upon to take part. For when Mr. A. M. Sullivan had restated his interpretation of the ancient Statutes of Edward III and Henry VIII at great length and with extraordinary acumen, Mr. Justice Darling and the other four dismissed the appeal on purely legal grounds.

I sat on the solicitors' bench in front, and when Casement was brought in by two warders, he saw me at once, smiled, and waved his hand. He looked much worn, but quite himself, and contemptuous of all this legal discussion. He was dressed in an ordinary grey suit, rather wrinkled, as though long laid aside. During the judgment he sat quite still, just smiling to me once, as though to say, "What's all this nonsense about?" Gavan Duffy told me the judgment was ignorant and confused, but to me that did not seem to matter much. For the fact of treason was beyond dispute, granted that Ireland was not a separate country, but "subject to the Crown." All was over in about half an hour. I waved to Casement, and he waved, smiled again, and disappeared. That was the last time I saw him.

I occupied the remaining days of his life in helping to organise appeals for his reprieve. I trusted chiefly to the case of Mr. Arthur Lynch, who, as mentioned above, though under death sentence upon the same charge had been speedily released. Of course, I found that, in spite of the proud motto, *Semper Eadem*, the Law does not abide the same, but is influenced by times, seasons, and respect of persons. What was possible for Mr. Arthur Lynch in 1903 was not possible for another Irishman in 1916, and the

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British enthusiasm for rebels is warm in direct variation with their distance in time and space. Yet I still believe Casement's life would have been saved by the appeals, just as the lives of other Irish rebels of that year were spared, but for the action of the Government in diverting sympathy by raising a personal issue that had nothing whatever to do with the case.

Early in June a member of the Government had called various London editors together, and informed them that in searching among Casement's papers they had discovered a diary alleged to be in his handwriting, though his name did not occur upon it ; and this diary was held to prove that for some years he had been addicted to what is known as "perversion" or "unnatural vice." Nine days before the execution, I wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* after giving various other reasons why it would be just to spare Casement the final degradation :

"It is common knowledge that insinuations against Casement's private character have been passing from mouth to mouth. These insinuations have no bearing on the charge of which he is convicted, nor have they been established or mentioned in Court. They are said to be founded on documents discovered by the police among Casement's property. How the alleged contents of these documents came to be whispered abroad I cannot say. In certain Continental countries one could imagine the police, or even the Government, spreading such rumours with the object of poisoning the public mind against a man whom they wished to destroy. I am told this was a common device also of the Inquisition in old days. But in the case of an English Government and English legal or police authorities such conduct is, of course, unthinkable."

My ironic assumption that no English Government or English officials could ever have been guilty of this mean

and loathsome crime, was patently contradicted by *The Times*, in a leading article published the morning after the execution. That powerful paper, which usually supports any Government action, there protested against "certain attempts made to use the Press for the purpose of raising issues which had no connection whatever with the charges on which Casement was tried. These issues," *The Times* continued, "should either have been raised in public in a straightforward manner or they should have been left severely alone." In conclusion the leading article said that the State Trial could only be weakened by "inspired innuendos, which, whatever their substance, were irrelevant, improper and un-English."

If only *The Times* had entered that just protest a month earlier, how different the result might have been, for our petitions were strongly supported. On July 31, I made a final effort in the House of Commons, and was well received by T. P. O'Connor, Josiah Wedgwood, William Byles, John Burns, Noel Buxton, and many others. But when R. L. Outhwaite introduced me to John Redmond, the leader of the constitutional Home Rule party turned rudely away at the mention of Casement's name, merely saying, "Please don't," and no more. Mr. Asquith received Gertrude Bannister, Casement's first cousin, in his private room, and told her a reprieve might be possible if she would plead insanity. This she refused, and then we knew that all was done that man could do and all was done in vain, though even as late as August 2, Philip Morrell, Eva Gore-Booth, and others made a last desperate appeal to the King himself. On the day before his death, Casement wrote on a postcard to his cousin :

"To-morrow, St. Stephens' Day, I die the death I sought, and may God forgive the mistakes and receive the intent—Ireland's freedom."

CHAPTER XXVI

WAR AND PEACE

THE NEXT TWO YEARS were times of deep depression and disquietude for the country, and consequently for myself. From time to time, especially towards the end of 1916, some shadowy chance of peace by negotiations appeared, but the cries of "Peace Chatter" and "Peace Offensive" raised by widely read papers laughed it to scorn, and the daily list of casualties continued to inspire residents at home with a sense of noble self-sacrifice. Even Lord Lansdowne's letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (November 29, 1917), suggesting that we had no desire of annihilating Germany as a great Power, or of dictating to the Germans their form of government, but proposed an international pact to give the world security—even this was received with derision by the advocates of a fight to the finish and "a knock-out blow."

For my own part during these terrible months, I was reduced to the pitiable position of an inactive watcher from a distance, cut off from the natural alleviation of sharing in the daily movements and perils of the front. Owing to my prolonged absence in the Dardanelles and Salonika, my place among the few correspondents then authorised in France had, of course, been filled; and repeated attacks of violent illness might, in any case, have kept me at home. The melancholy of such restraint was increased by the death of many friends. At such a time it was a rare relief to climb to William Yeats's upper chamber in Woburn Buildings, and listen to discussions in which ignorance saved me the trouble of sharing. Such was a discussion on October 30, 1916, of which I made the following brief record :

“ Sturge Moore and Miss Pye were there ; Ezra Pound and his wife (he singularly silent !) ; Chapelow, the Conscientious Objector poet, now at large after much persecution ; and a few others, unknown to me. Yeats was in an interesting mood. He talked of his entrance into Spiritism after the Magic of former days. His attendant spirit is Leo Africanus, a man of the 16th century, who converses with him in Italian. Also the spirit of a policeman, Emerson, who drowned himself from Putney Bridge in 1850, as Yeats discovered in the Somerset House records. Also the spirit of Luise Kirsch, a friend of Goethe, from whom (Goethe) he had messages. All this he appears to believe absolutely, and such belief must be highly consoling in these days.

“ Then he talked of Freud and Jung, and the Subconscious Self, applying the doctrine to art. He said the great thing is to reduce the Conscious Self to humility, as by the imitation of some ancient master, so leaving the Unconscious Self free to work. He said all reading of contemporaries and imitation of them was bad. The Self in poetry must be a dramatist, the poet being a spectator of life, and so must have a universal outlook and appeal. This I have always thought myself, though vaguely. There was some discussion also on *vers libre*, with sidelong shots at Ezra Pound. He then highly praised Pater's *Marius*, which he had just re-read with intense admiration for its sentences and style. He traces English prose backwards only through Pater, Landor, and Sir Thomas Browne, but admitted some of Swift. On parting he gave me his book called *Reveries*.”

Yes, in those terrible days, when the spirits of the newly slain seemed to be rushing thick through the air like arrows, it must have been consoling to meditate upon sentences and style, or to communicate with the soul of a bygone suicide or a feminine friend of Goethe. But, as usual, I was clamped tight to this ordinary world, writing every week a “ middle ”

for Massingham's *Nation* ; helping Evelyn Sharp, so far as a man could, in her unremitting and almost ruinous labour upon *Votes for Women*, and speaking at public meetings up and down the country, chiefly upon the war and Suffrage.

In May when I was at Sheffield, I naturally went south-west to see Edward Carpenter in his plain stone cottage, looking over its own field and garden at Millthorpe among the moors. We walked together far over the hills, commanding the wide uplands of Derbyshire, and for a few days and evenings I enjoyed the converse of that singularly beautiful, imaginative, and concrete soul—an enjoyment heightened by the place itself, the sweet air, the roaring of thunder among the valleys, and all my innumerable and unconscious associations with mountain regions from childhood up. It was a time overwhelming in poignant delight.

But already I felt the touch of an illness, due, the doctors thought, to some lingering poison from Africa. On the afternoon of my return (May 14, 1917), I went to the Central Hall for what I suppose must have been among the first, perhaps the very first, of meetings for the League of Nations ; and certainly the League was finely ushered into this distracted world by Lord Bryce, General Smuts, Lord Buckmaster, Lord Hugh Cecil, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. During the next few days I had to speak myself—at G. P. Gooch's, in the Central Hall for Civil Liberties, and at Guildford, with Roger Fry in the chair. But the pain was almost intolerable, and so it continued for many weeks, only relieved in the evenings by the blessed powers of morphia, that true lotus of the world. In recollection of those evenings when hope of returning to ordinary life at last began, I wrote a few sentences, from which I may quote the following :

“ Every night I waited for it, torn by anguish such as I had supposed no human being could endure. And every night, at ten o'clock a lamp on the right of my hospital bed

suddenly rose, and with a joy like a shipwrecked mariner's, I cried, 'A light on the starboard bow !'

"Then a white figure came silently to the tossing bedside, and without a word I stretched out my bare arm. Between two fingers the white figure gathered up the softest part she could find, and with the other hand thrust a fine needle under the skin—a needle so fine that I hardly felt the prick of it as it pumped just one drop of brown liquid into my blood. A finger was passed gently over the place, the light went out, the white figure vanished, and, quietly as a ghost, I slid into paradise.

"It was no paradise of the inane and shadowy dead, no monotonous Hades, estranged from mortal things. My heart beat quick with life, and throbbed with exultation. Courage and human affection filled my soul. I knew there was no combination of murderous or governmental terrors of which I need be afraid ; and, though not much given to universal love, I could have clasped the whole race of mankind to my heart without affectation or absurdity. I perceived all the perplexities of the common world. I counted all its sorrows. I knew that the self-seeker whom I most abhorred was only mistaken in his purposes, and that the judge who hanged my friend was only the victim of the Law. Nothing appalled me ; nothing moved my hatred. Every night I designed a scheme by which at the same moment every evening, each inhabitant of the terraqueous globe should receive a similar inoculation, and having once learnt the supreme happiness of courage and of love, should never again return to wallow in the accustomed mire of our daily cowardice and savagery, but, in the service which is perfect freedom, should unite to build that gallant city hitherto unconjectured except by the maker and builder, who is divine.

"Sometimes I moved upon a lower level, and my narrow bed became the familiar Balkan Peninsula, now beautiful, happy, full of glorious reminiscences, and requiring only some delightful rearrangement, in which no one would be

assassinated ; but Ferdinand, Tino and Venizelos should smilingly combine for the common good. Sometimes the white sheets of my bed were converted into the snows of the Caucasus, and once more I made my home with Georgians in communities of anarchic innocence.

“ A few effects of these political visions, it is true, were not so pleasant. For sometimes, under the influence of the drug, all my limbs but one would remain at peace, and that one would twitch and writhe and kick like a discontented province. Whereupon we who composed the majority of the limbs would sorrowfully protest, and finally discard it. We no longer counted it one of ourselves. We looked upon it as a noisy and troublesome patient in the next bed. We would gladly have laid it out for amputation upon the proper table. Yet it was my leg—my own right leg—not a thing to be flung away at random. It was my Ulster.”

In the spring of that year (March 9, 1917), I had been ordered to give evidence before the Dardanelles Commission, then sitting under the chairmanship of Lord Pickford, who, in his questions and understanding, appeared to me the very embodiment of all that makes a noble judge, and in the following month I began writing my large and detailed history, called *The Dardanelles Campaign*. The book sold well, though it had been anticipated by John Masefield's accurate, brilliant and poetic sketch called *Gallipoli* ; and it was most generously received by reviewers, especially by Masefield himself.

On February 6, 1918, the Woman Suffrage Bill received Royal Assent. For my supposed share in that victory (no man's share was to be compared with the sacrifice of scores among the women who fought for it) for that small share and other reasons some 300 friends gathered in the Grafton Galleries on April 28, 1918, to celebrate what I called my “apotheosis.” With exquisite grace and charm, the chair

was taken by Elizabeth Robins, finest of Ibsen actresses, and the imaginative writer who had dragged beauty from the cold darkness of the Arctic Circle. And there spoke Israel Zangwill, keen judge of literature; Edith Durham, so gallant, so humorous; and John Harris of the Anti-Slavery Society, recalling Angola and the Cocoa Islands. On the military side fine letters were read from Sir Ian Hamilton, Sir Archibald Murray, and General David Henderson, my superior officer in Ladysmith, and for journalism a startling eulogy from St. Loe Strachey of the *Spectator*. My own editor, Massingham, was among the friendly audience. I answered the exaggerated but delicious praise and a presentation of £280, with a few remarks upon the pleasure of fighting always on the side of winning causes, and no doubt I ought to have died when the charming ceremony ended. But few select the right moment for death.

My next step was not into death but into Ireland, where the situation was indeed deadly. In the previous summer (July 1917), Mr. Lloyd George had instituted in Dublin a Convention to frame a constitution for a United Ireland with a single Parliament within the Empire. He naturally wondered what Americans, on coming into our war "for the freedom of small nationalities," would think of that small nationality under our control for centuries of misery. Sir Horace Plunkett, the far-seeing statesman and true servant of the Irish people, was chairman, and notable leaders of most parties worked their hardest. But Sinn Fein stood aloof, and Sinn Fein was the popular party, though different in nature from the Irreconcilables who later usurped the name. John Redmond had recently died, and John Dillon, almost the last of the Irish Parliamentary heroes in the Gladstonian age, had taken his place, when, after months of disputation, "Æ." resigned from the Convention, when he found that Ulster's heavy foot stamped upon all reasonable terms which the Southern Unionists were willing to accept. A Majority Report was published in April

1918," but another hope had gone, and any possible service the Convention might have accomplished was wrecked by Lloyd George's Act to extend conscription to a country whose long-sought Charter of Home Rule had been four years buried in the Statute Book, never to rise again.

The Irish Conscription Act laid the tombstone on Home Rule, and, except as an epitaph, the words "Home Rule" have not since been heard. The Convention was thrown into a ditch, and Sinn Fein became the only cry. Indignation united nearly the whole Southern people. In Dublin I counted friends in every party and both religions, but I found all were at one in wrath, their only difference being how best to resist. Most significant of all, even the Catholic Church through her bishops proclaimed that resistance was now justified, and violence was "not contrary to the Laws of God." Some people spoke of taking to the hills, some of combining in groups and fighting to the last, and some of destroying the cattle and tearing up the crops lest they should go to feed the British tyrants. Others advocated a silent and passive resistance carried out by hundreds of thousands; and that, being "Æ.'s" counsel, was probably the wisest.

So I found all my conspicuous friends in Dublin united in opposition to the English Parliament's decree—Mrs. Green, "Æ.," James and John MacNeill, Tom Johnson, leader of the Labour Party, James Stephens, the leprechaun writer, Susan Mitchell of Plunkett House, Gavan Duffy, Constantine Curran, our Dublin correspondent on the *Nation*, James Good, wisest of journalists, James Douglas, wisest of Quaker tradesmen, Diarmid Coffey, and his beautiful young wife, so soon to die, John Eglinton (Magee), the shrewd critic even of Ireland, Maud Gonne MacBride, loveliest of rebels, and Countess Markievicz, wildest and most beloved. James Bouchier was there, too, trying to accomplish for his own country what he had accomplished for Bulgaria. And then I met Arthur Griffith, leader of Sinn Fein, a man of

no great personal distinction in appearance, but having an enormous influence upon Irish history, as he proved. There, too, was Tim Healy, of the shrewd and biting word, speaking to me chiefly on the Irish indifference to death, and the fresh and unusual stir of political interest among Irish women. All of these, together with many more, such as Stephen Gwynn and Hugh Law, both moderate members of the Parliamentary Party in Westminster, agreed in opposition to the Conscription Act, though differing so widely in temperament and upon most subjects of public life.

Among all these characteristic Irish people I was received with a welcome such as may justly gladden the heart of any English visitor. It was that welcome of salutary frankness from which we English can easily learn why our country is hated throughout the world. Few of us now feel national conceit. We accept contempt or abuse with what Carlyle called a "godlike indifference," but it is difficult to remain divinely indifferent to hints at our national vulgarity and mental vacuum, insinuated with the delicacy of an old-fashioned hatpin probing the heart. Overwhelmed by my native humility, I could only gasp dumbly, like a fish on the sand, and sometimes I came away from the friendliest gatherings feeling like a man who has been most skilfully operated upon for a disease he never had. Yet, after being thus justly visited for the sins of my fathers, I was sure to return night after night, drawn by the enchantment of mixing with foreigners whose language I could readily understand, and by whom I could be understood, if I spoke at all. Nowhere else could I listen to conversation so copious, so imaginative, so envenomed, so free from boredom and the wearisome trammels of accurate information.

Suddenly the tension broke. Lord French, as Lieutenant-Governor, issued a Proclamation speaking of "voluntary enlistment," and the hope of "securing a contribution of men without resort to compulsion." Lord French had himself been opposed to the Act from the first, but why the British

Government stultified themselves by half-hearted attempts to enforce it, I was not sure. They had been drafting vast numbers of British soldiers, tanks, guns and aeroplanes into Ireland, as though to crush out every opposition ; but perhaps at the last moment they doubted what effect another bloody massacre in Ireland might have upon America and the neutrals. Or, having about 130,000 Irishmen already fighting in the army, they doubted what might happen if they dragged in a lot of Irish conscripts, and whether it was worth while to deplete our forces in France just to stamp upon " the Sister Island."

But just at that time events were moving too rapidly for talk of conscription in Ireland or anywhere else. The final crisis of the war had arrived, and with my usual good fortune, I was present at it.

In July, Robert Donald, who had been my friend on the *Daily Chronicle* ever since he became editor at the end of 1903, asked me with his usual courtesy (I think he was the most courteous editor I have known) to take Philip Gibbs's place in France for a month. So after two years' absence I found myself near to a front of war again, but for a correspondent how great was the difference ! In old days half one's time, or more than half, was spent in finding food and shelter for one's horses, men and self. Now I was welcomed into the stately Château of Rollancourt, near Hesdin—stately in front, but having little more inside than a knife-blade. Copious food was provided three times a day, not to speak of afternoon tea ! I had a real bedroom all to myself, and servants to make the bed, wash up, and cook. Every evening I need only tell my officer where I wanted to go next day, and at dawn a motor would be snorting at the gate, ready for both of us. When I had driven out, and seen or heard what I could in the time, I returned to the château at about 1.30, and met the other correspondents (there were only five or six of us). Each told where he had been and what he had seen or heard. Knowledge was equally pooled.

There was no rivalry, no "scooping." After lunch all retired to write composite despatches, the only chance of personal distinction being the "style," that is, the way of looking at things, and the proportion kept. By 3.30 our own Press Officers, acting as Censors and living in the château, had read and approved or disapproved. They handed the messages to the despatch-rider, waiting at the door with his motor-cycle, and the thing was done. All had been organised and paid for by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, and the strain of a war-correspondent's life was relaxed until it almost ceased.

I was equally fortunate in my officers and my colleagues. Most welcome to me of all was C. E. Montague, whom I had known by name when for many years he had served on the leader-writing staff of the *Manchester Guardian*, and was the dramatic critic as well. In that height of our profession, he was so much moved by the invasion of Belgium at the beginning of the war that he dyed his white hair, and, with a splendid lie, enlisted as a private in the "Sportsman's Battalion," for he was a famous mountaineer. We have all heard of men whose dark hair through fear turned white in a single night, but Montague is the only man I know whose white hair in a single night turned dark through courage. In spite of a terrible wound during bomb-practice, he seemed to me a man of unshrinking nerves, never hesitating at a point of danger, and never revealing the fear that all men feel but some can hide. His eye for country, especially for the course of watersheds, was unerring, and in consequence it was always a special pleasure to me when it was his turn to accompany me as my Press Officer ; for the lie of country is to me of peculiar interest. But still more I delighted in his amazing knowledge of literature, above all of Shakespeare. He recognised the smallest reference, and exact quotations flowed from him so copiously that he had to dam them up by gallant self-restraint, though I could often watch the quotation sticking in his throat. Through an

unexpected quality of mind, he disliked taking responsibility. He was, indeed, almost painfully modest, or perhaps he felt he was under superior orders as in the *Guardian* office at home, and rather liked it.

On August 7 we were summoned to Rawlinson's Headquarters at Flixecourt, and had the situation and the morrow's intentions explained by General Montgomery and General Vivian. By order of Foch, now in supreme command, Mangin's army had strongly counter-attacked Ludendorff's attempted thrust around Château-Thierry nearly three weeks before (July 18), and now Rawlinson's IVth Army was to co-operate by clearing the perilous front that threatened Amiens. At two o'clock next morning Montague, Beach-Thomas, and I, started from Rollancourt in the dark, and passing through Doullens, reached the long high ridge that rises from the fine but shattered church of Corbie, about seven miles east of Amiens, and between the Ancre and Somme stretches to Bray, and thence to Peronne. On the south side, beyond the Somme and all its reedy pools, it overlooks the once fertile undulating plain of Santerre, marked by the well-known names of Villers-Bretonneux Hamel, Rosières, Chaulne, and Roye, down as far as Montdidier, where the French line began.

By the time we had climbed to the top of the ridge it was getting light, but a white mist, as of autumn, veiled the whole country and prevented any clear view of the plain, over which the guns kept up a ceaseless booming. Montague walked with me a mile or two along the ridge until we reached a point known as Welcome Wood, where we had come under shell-fire only a day or two before. All was now quiet there, but the mist did not lift. It was bitterly disappointing, for, without any scientific reasoning, I felt assured that this August 8 was the turning point of all the war. That vague hope was strengthened when large bodies of men came marching in order towards us down the road. They were German prisoners, whole companies of them,

and though Germans had been captured by thousands before, I greeted these as evidences of victory, though without reason ; and I was right. On that misty ridge, from which I could but dimly discern dark lines of what appeared to be infantry, interspersed with larger objects that might be tanks or guns, I was present at the cardinal point of what Ludendorff has called his " Black Day." But long before the sun could clear the view, we were obliged to hurry back to compose the joint telegrams of hope.

On another day, it being Saturday and the correspondent's holiday (it was August 10), Cadge and I were able to reach points much further off, and, when in Le Quesnoy beside the long straight road from Amiens to Roye, we came under heavy fire from field guns and aeroplanes, so that something struck me on the head just as I was drawing a rough plan of the road in front. For the moment my attention was fixed upon a large body of our cavalry, including several of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, who came trotting happily past us along the road, and then extended to open order across the open ground on both sides. I suppose the intention was to capture by assault the small town of Roye, lying about three miles in front beyond a low ridge that concealed it. As might have been expected even by a civilian, they found the apparently open ground thickly scarred with deep trenches and crossed by wire entanglements, utterly impassable for cavalry, or for anything else, except perhaps tanks. The men began closing up to a centre on the road, and when formed there under shell-fire, I suppose they received the order to charge ; for perhaps the commanding officer remembered Balaclava. Along that straight and open road they charged at full gallop. At the top of the rising ground, one saw dark and thickish little woods, called the Bois-en-Zed from their shape, one on each side of the road. As our cavalry drew nearer and nearer, a raging storm of machine-gun and rifle-fire came shrieking upon them from those two woods, and they melted away.

Two days later, following the Canadians' front line, I was able to advance almost up to the woods ; and just one week after the charge I could enter them and look down the reverse slope to Roye, which was being heavily bombarded. But along that straight road, on both sides and in the centre, the corpses of our men and horses lay thick, blackening and rotting where they fell.

As the enemy gradually retired, our headquarters were moved from Rollancourt to the older and more substantial château of Vauchelles, within easy walking distance of St. Wulfran's great but unfinished church at Abbeville, and the deep river running between ancient walls. And just a week after that turning-point of the war on August 8, I was able to attend the thanksgiving service at Amiens for the preservation of the cathedral ; and no Frenchman present could have been more thankful than I, to whom the building had long been so familiar that even under the protective sacking which covered the porches I could imagine each of the sculptured Biblical figures and scenes.

So the long days went past, and on each I was able to accompany one part or other of our victorious line as it advanced. Two days especially remain illuminated in my memory. One was August 24, when I went with Montague to the site of Mesnil, a village steeply overhanging the valley of the Ancre, opposite the ill-omened heights of Thiepval. We made our way down through the bare sticks of what was once a wood, but was now strewn with appalling fragments of man, and Montague looked at me sideways now and then to see if I noticed them. I did notice them, but there was nothing left to say. So we came to the edge of the flooded Ancre and its marshes, across which we balanced our way upon a few boards. It was doubtful how far we should proceed up the opposite slopes just south of Thiepval Wood ; for the Germans, though evidently retreating, still held the top of the long ridges. But, pointing to the base of a shattered windmill and the ruins of a few huts at the summit,

Montague said, "That's Pozières," and I knew Pozières had stood on the famous road from Albert to Bapaume, close neighbour to terrible Contalmaison. It was impossible to turn back. Up the deserted grass we climbed from point to point till we saw British soldiers swarming out from Thiepval wood on our left, and suddenly small "pockets" of Germans appeared, rising from pits and shallow ravines in our front. A New Zealander, having a revolver but no cartridges, had just joined us, and so we called upon the advancing enemy to surrender. This they did very willingly, poor fellows, holding up their hands, and at our command throwing away their rifles. Montague and I formed a little batch of seven into marching order, and conducted them back down the slope and across the river again. Conversing with them on the way, I found that three were still under nineteen; one was a good Socialist; all were dead sick of the war, all intelligent and quite good-tempered. One told me regretfully that his mother had a nice little house near Frankfurt-on-Oder, and always kept a good bed with clean sheets ready waiting for him, but here he had been for months coated in mud, sleeping in filth among rats, and covered with lice. It was the simple lamentation of millions on both sides. After looking at me rather curiously, he asked if it was usual for British officers to go into battle unarmed and I had to shuffle the answer, conveying the impression, I fear, that British officers were too courageous to depend upon mere weapons. Handing our capture over to the authorities at Mesnil, Montague and I then proceeded down stream to the piteous ruins of Albert, where shells were still throwing up clouds of dust from crashing masonry.

My other day was on the 26th, when I went with Neville Lytton through Doullens and Beaumetz to Boyelles, about half-way between Arras and Bapaume, whence we crossed the ruined railway and road into a high grass country with wide depressions and ridges. Lytton had to stop on the summit of the highest ridge, being still lame from a wound,

but I went on, wishing to look over a distant crest which I knew must conceal the little town of Croisilles. Unhappily, the Germans still held the town, having resisted two attacks of a Middlesex regiment, and in a shallow trench near the top of the crest, I found a thin line of the Middlesex under command of a major, who told me he had already lost two hundred men. The survivors were being horribly harassed by shells and the hissing rain of machine-guns, which is, I think, the most terrifying means of death ; for it is aimed, and yet it scatters. Having discovered that I was not a correspondent who had worked his men up to murderous rage by making out that they thoroughly enjoyed the war, and especially going "over the top," the major kindly led me back under this disagreeable fire to have a drink in the officers' shelter, and I then returned to Lytton across the breezy upland, unpleasantly pursued with various forms of deadly missiles all the way. It was to be my last experience of serious danger in open and international war.

That evening Philip Gibbs came back, naturally enraged at having missed all the eventful month ; and reluctantly I had to make my way home, only cheered by the delightful companionship of Aubrey Herbert, who was coming from some wild mission to Albania. History moved swiftly then. Bulgaria collapsed, Turkey and Austria sued for peace. Lord Milner told the *Evening Standard* that we had better make peace while there was someone to make it with.

Early in November, since my book on the Dardanelles campaign was at last published, I was able to return as an addition to the small body of our correspondents in France. The War Office sent me out at the special request of those correspondents and their Press Officers. "*Laudari a laudatis*"—there is no finer compliment, and only once have I enjoyed that compliment in a higher degree. So back to France I went, accompanied by a lively and imaginative young journalist, Cecil Roberts, whose stay with us was, unfortunately, brief. I found that our quarters had now been

advanced to Lille, where the Vauban fortifications would have filled Uncle Toby with ecstasy. Next day (November 9), I drove out through Le Quesnoy, which had just been occupied by New Zealanders, to the old fortress of Maubeuge through which the Sambre rushes to the Meuse, and where shells were still occasionally falling. Then, after a service of thanksgiving in the fine cathedral of Tournai, which the Fifth Army occupied the day before—then came the long-expected hour.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BURDEN OF IRELAND

AFTER RETURNING from Cologne in February, I was kept in London for the greater part of 1919, its distractions being mitigated only by brief commissions to Ireland and Denmark. In London an Englishman may enjoy a certain amplitude of life, and I have found it the only place where I can fully understand what people mean. The cheerful irony of the London working classes is to me natural speech, and the open-hearted or sceptical tolerance of the educated people accepts almost anyone who can touch without boredom upon sport, politics, and even literature. I continued to write regularly every week for the *Nation*, usually "middle" articles, but sometimes "leaders," and occasionally signed descriptive articles, when I could speak with the assurance of personal knowledge. I still felt aggrieved that my editor refused to allow me to sign the "middles." The roundabout ways of saying "I," such as "we" or "the present writer," always annoy me in essays that are essentially personal; and if I happened to write a "middle" upon some subject that concerned me intimately, I should have liked readers to know who wrote it; besides, my future position in the trade had to be considered. For outside the *Nation* office my name was likely to remain entirely unknown, as it remained. But Massingham's refusal continued firm. I still think he was wrong; for a "middle," unlike a "leader," must have a private and personal tone. But my judgment may be perverted by disappointed vanity, which is the same as vexation of spirit. For though my stuff was sometimes

praised by such model critics as Lord Morley, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Birrell, all the readers remained ignorant of my existence.

No matter for that. Under such an editor, at all events, there was not much chance of peaceful meditation, or of cheerful acquiescence, in the events of that terrible year. The end of the war was followed, it is true, by an outburst of false prosperity, enriching profiteers and a few manufacturers, mainly owing, as Masterman, with his ironic cynicism, used to tell us, to the demand for decorated night-gowns and underlinen among the harlots of Argentina. But the gradual return of demobilised men by hundreds of thousands disorganised the labour market, and the men themselves found no place for their only marketable goods (their power of work), whereas during the war they had been promised all manner of pleasing rewards—situations kept open, widely distributed kisses, and homes for heroes. Add the fall in the purchasing value of wages to the increase of unemployment owing to the spoils extracted from Germany, and you need not wonder at the strikes that afflicted the coal-miners and all the country, culminating in the railway strike of September, which astonishingly revealed the joys of honest toil to the rich and great. A noble lord, for instance, was proud to milk goats in Hyde Park as his contribution to the country's safety.

But more disastrous than even our internal discontents was, in the first place, the crazy attempt of the Coalition Government to "put down Bolshevism" in Russia by landing forces at Archangel in support of Koltchak, Denikin, and Yudénitch, who were attacking the armies of Lenin and Trotsky from other sides. As might have been expected, the intervention of foreigners only strengthened the central Government in Russia, and after months of futile effort and expenditure, Mr. Churchill's enterprise was ignominiously abandoned. The whole episode was cause enough for indignation, but a stronger cause still was the atrocious Peace

which vengeance was begetting upon ignorance, and the insolent revelries of Versailles.

In regard to our follies in Russia and our acquiescence in the crime of Versailles, even Massingham in his *Nation* could do little beyond the almost impotent indignation of words, and I could do still less. Perhaps I achieved some small effect by denouncing up and down the country our atrocious system of blockade, continued for seven months after the Armistice, and causing the deaths of thousands of men, women and children among Germany's peaceful population. As I was but a journalist and had stood alone in revealing the actual effects of this abomination when I was in Cologne, no great attention was paid to my protests until, early in March, General Plumer, commanding on the Rhine, telegraphed to Mr. Lloyd George that the discipline of the British troops was being undermined by the spectacle of the sufferings among German women and children under the stress of hunger. Even Versailles then agreed, in return for a rigorous system of payment, to send monthly supplies of food. But equally serviceable in the end was the creation of a "Fight the Famine" Committee, organised by some Quakers and other friends of mine among "The Stage Army of the Good," as I called it—a mere handful of merciful people, who contrived by their ubiquitous energy to conceal the paucity of their numbers. From time to time in our history that Stage Army of Mercy has stood ready for active service, always maintaining the prestige of the English name far more truly than the armies that are not required to march round behind the scenery and back again to the footlights.

Among the "distractions" of the time, one or two may be accounted pleasurable, though distracting. Such certainly was the celebration of Ruskin's memory by a meeting in the Fine Arts Society's rooms, Adelphi, on the centenary of his birth (February 8), followed by the formation of a committee to arrange an exhibition of his drawings. Another "distraction"

of that year, at least as pleasurable as that attempt to serve the ghost of my old Master, was the beginning of my friendship with Cecil Sharp, who, by his enthusiastic collection of the English folk-songs and folk-dances, was then restoring some vestiges of gaiety to the English people.

Still another "distraction," pleasurable also in its way, though filling me with apprehension, was the publication of a selection from my own verses, chiefly composed within the few preceding years.¹ I had always been shy about my writing, even in prose, and that was why I began so late. Under the stress of journalism I had, it is true, written a portentous quantity, both in newspapers and in books, though the shyness, the reluctance, the doubt and hesitation have always remained, and have, no doubt, characterised all my stuff. But one suffers in verse from a peculiar sensitiveness. It is almost too personal, too near oneself to be borne, and up to that time, except a few jolly burlesques, I had published hardly a line of verse under my own name, though a good deal without signature. Now the publisher insisted that the book must appear barefaced and flaunting my own name. I felt like a purdah woman stripped of her veil, and to this day I have been unable to endure reading or hearing criticism of it, whether in praise or blame.

That autumn also I was politely invited (for the first time, I think, though not for the last), to stand as Member of Parliament for the Seven Universities, but then, as afterwards, I refused. One reason, no doubt, was that I should have had no chance of being returned, for whereas in all other countries known to me the great body of students are advanced in politics up to the point of revolution, in England a solid majority can be counted upon to vote Conservative. I cannot say why, for outside Oxford and Cambridge, they are seldom rich, and seldom sprung from the well-to-do classes. But, also, I knew, I was not made for

¹ *Lines of Life* (Allen & Unwin : 1920), followed in 1926 by a narrower selection in a number of the sixpenny *Augustan Poets* (Benn).

Parliament. I was not aggressive. I detested oratory not only because incapable of it. I could not endure the hanging-about, the waste of time, the stifling gossip, the calculation of Party tactics habitual in the House of Commons. Indeed, my attachment to any Party would be wavering, and I could not have worked up animosity to such opponents as Mr. Arthur Balfour or Lord Robert Cecil. So I gladly escaped from a personal danger that hardly even threatened me.

But more genuine, and entirely welcome, was an invitation in November to meet Litvinoff in Copenhagen on behalf of the *Daily Herald*. Owing to storms and the Russian indifference to time and space, I had to wait many days for his arrival, and so became acquainted with a singularly beautiful city, and a singularly charming and friendly people—I suppose the happiest people in Europe, and therefore the least known. At the time, however, their hospitality was not extended to Bolsheviks, and seven hotels in turn refused Litvinoff admission. When at last he found rooms in a little inn, I was the only correspondent he would receive, and after two or three prolonged conversations I was able to frame an account of the Soviet views which he approved.

He was a remarkable man—large, sallow, heavy in figure and face, looking out on the world with a humorous but slightly puzzled expression, as well he might; too definite and decisive, I thought, for the ordinary theoretic Russian, but not noticeably Jewish. Indeed, his wife, herself a Jewess, protested to me he was not Jewish at all. I had known her as Miss Ivy Low, niece of Sir Sidney Low, and at parting Litvinoff entrusted me with various presents for her, together with a large doll for their little daughter. As I was regarded with great suspicion by the landing officers at Harwich, I inwardly hoped that they would cut the doll open in search for hidden documents and find nothing but sawdust. But in this hope I was disappointed.

Yet, throughout all these “distractions” and my regular

work in journalism, my chief interest and chief endeavours as a writer were centred in Ireland. Indeed, during the three years after the Armistice my visits to Ireland were so frequent, and my mind so concentrated upon the disgrace to my own country's reputation there that for the first and last time I received an indignant protest from Massingham, accusing me of leaving him in the lurch when he wanted articles from me upon different subjects, while I was all the time writing about Ireland for the *Daily Herald*, the *New York Nation*, or the *Contemporary Review*, and was, besides, speaking on the subject up and down the country.

In July I found the situation outwardly quieter than I had in March of that year (1919) and I was able in comparative peace to enjoy long drives through the country with James MacNeill and his brother Charles, the student of Irish antiquity. Also I enjoyed an oasis of peace with John Masefield and John Galsworthy at Cushendun in the glens of Antrim, where the Parrys had made their home. Long discourse I enjoyed, too, with Mrs. Alice Stopford Green in her Dublin watch-tower, and with "Æ."

In Ireland's wretched history since the English invasion, the year 1920 will always be counted beside the atrocious ages of Elizabeth, Cromwell, the Penal Laws, 'Ninety-eight, and the Famine ; and much as I have seen of wars, its successive months remain in my memory as conspicuous for horror. It was the year of the "Black-and-Tans," the year of the Auxiliaries, the ex-officers, to whom I unjustly added the title of ex-gentlemen—unjustly because few of them could ever have been gentlemen ; and, indeed, most officers of the Regular Army in Ireland repudiated them altogether.¹ Worst of all, it was the year of reprisals, at

¹ "They can best be described as a tough lot. Those companies that had the good fortune to have good commanders, generally ex-Regular officers, who could control their men, performed useful work, but the exploits of certain other companies under weak or inefficient commanders went a long way to discredit the whole force."—*Annals of an Active Life*, by General Sir Nevil Macready ; Vol. II, p. 483.

first unauthorised, but officially authorised in the following January by Mr. Lloyd George's Government.

It was the reprisals upon the Irish people that Mr. Asquith called "a hellish policy" (November 19, 1920). In his charge to the Grand Jury in Belfast, December 1, 1920, Mr. Justice Pim laid down the legal dictum: "There can be no legal reprisals. If reprisals were carried out, or if there were an excuse for that kind of thing, it would lead directly and absolutely to anarchy, and to nothing else." Yet in little more than a month after that ruling, Mr. Lloyd George's Government authorised reprisals as legal.

It was on a visit to Ireland in October 1920 that I came to know Erskine Childers more intimately than before. I had met him once or twice in Dublin as a friend of Mrs. Green, and had read with admiration his book, *The Riddle of the Sands*—one of those items that added to England's alarm at the growth of the German Navy before the war. Now I came to know him in his own house, beside his beautiful and emotional American wife, who lay invalided upon a couch, inspiring her husband, her young children, and many admiring young men and women, never, never to depart a hair's breadth from the resolve to win absolute separation from the British bond, but rather to fight to the death against the hereditary foe.

On my return to London in mid-October, a small party of us paraded Parliament Square with placards and posters bearing appropriate inscriptions, such as "We English Protest," "Stop Reprisals," and "Terrorism is not Government," amid an apathetic or hostile crowd of onlookers. But in consequence of a meeting in the House of Commons, at which Bernard Shaw, Sir Horace Plunkett, Robert Lynd, and Joseph Devlin were present, we formed a body called "The Peace with Ireland Committee," under the chairmanship of Lord Henry Bentinck (how serviceable is a Conservative with extremist views!). On that very day (October 25) Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork,

died in Brixton gaol, having fasted on hunger-strike for seventy-four days.

Three days after I joined the procession of the Irish in London that conducted his body from Brixton gaol to Euston, amid the respectful silence of the English crowds lining both sides of all the streets. I then followed the coffin to Cork, the English Government having refused to allow it to be landed in Dublin. Beside one branch of the River Lee, in the rather beautiful City Hall, soon afterwards burnt down by our Black-and-Tans, I went with the Irish people who passed continuously two and two round the open coffin, guarded by Irish Volunteers, while outside, the streets were paraded by British regiments with armoured cars. The exposed face of the dead man was yellow-pale, wasted to extreme thinness, but fine and resolute—the face of a poet as well as a patriot. On the door of the Hall a large placard repeated the coffin's inscription: "Terence MacSwiney, murdered by the Foreign Enemy, in the Fourth Year of the Republic."

As I returned from Cork through Dublin (November 1, 1920) the officials in Mountjoy gaol were hanging a boy, Kevin Barry, on a dubious charge of complicity in the murder of a soldier, and men and women were kneeling in prayer around the prison walls. Perhaps it was owing to this British triumph that Lord Salisbury next day proposed the official authorisation of reprisals, and that Mr. Lloyd George in his speech at the Mansion House in London (November 9) declared that his Government "had murder by the throat." Two days after that speech I was back again in Dublin, commissioned by the *Daily Herald* and resolved if possible to investigate the rumoured outrages and atrocities on both sides in the south and west of that country. At Plunkett House in Merrion Square, I heard that, since the spring, thirty-three of the creameries, so carefully organised for

years past by "Æ." and Sir Horace Plunkett, had been destroyed by the British irregular forces, chiefly in Tipperary and Limerick (ultimately the number rose to over fifty). In a motor lent me and driven by Dr. Neil Watson, who had served with distinction in the R.A.M.C. during the war, and was then engaged chiefly in treating shell-shocked soldiers, I started west on November 13, accompanied by James MacNeill. We went on through the exquisite scenes and colours of Ireland—the most beautiful country I have known. Through Thurles and past Holy Cross Abbey, and past the historic mount of Cashel, where ancient castle and abbey look far over the Tipperary plain. All the way was marked by ruined police barracks, and creameries and cabins ruined in reprisal. Between Bansha and Galbally, we were stopped by a squad of soldiers under an officer in mufti, guarding the smoking remains of two lorries. Two policemen had been killed in ambush there the afternoon before, and we should have been arrested but for the inscription of "Capt. R.A.M.C." upon Neil Watson's kit. Passing through the Galtry mountains, soon to be the scene of the tragedy at Bealnablath when Michael Collins was killed by his own people (August 22, 1922), we came to Mitchelstown ("Remember Mitchelstown!" cried Mr. Gladstone when one single Irishman had been shot there, I think accidentally, so many years before), and for the night we reached Mallow, partly ruined already, and soon to be ruined more.

We drove on to Tralee, a centre of Black-and-Tan activities. The City Hall and several houses had already been burnt. From time to time during our night there I heard the smashing of doors and the outcries of the inhabitants as private homes were raided. Only after manœuvres for complete secrecy could I contrive to speak to the leading people of the town. Shortly before our arrival, Hugh Martin, my colleague on the *Daily News*, had been violently threatened by Black-and-Tan officers for describing the true conditions of the district, and had barely escaped with life through a

necessary lie. It was here that the British armed forces drew a cordon across the main street and forced all passengers to kneel in the mud with their hands over their heads and take the Oath of Allegiance. They then proceeded to a cinema, and, flourishing revolvers, called upon the spectators to sing the English National Anthem, a tune little known in those parts, and not becoming more popular. I wondered at the time what the King thought of such allegiance, and what God thought of such prayers for the King's salvation.¹

Throughout the whole of that region murder already prevailed. On reaching the bridge at Killaloe, where Lough Derg pours out into the Shannon, we heard from the priest, Father Green, and others, the terrible fate of four youths who had been shot dead on the middle of the bridge two nights before (November 16-17) by Black-and-Tans, who were conducting them under arrest. The excuse for the murder was "attempting to escape"—an excuse that was already becoming a laughable byword throughout the country. After seeing the four youthful bodies, all pierced with bullet holes, in the chapel at Scariff, we drove on through Ennis, where Mrs. Vere O'Brien, a niece of Matthew Arnold, entertained us, and so through Gort to Lady Gregory's home at Coole, justly celebrated by W. B. Yeats, and by Lady Gregory's own high service there to the remembrance of Irish literature and the renewal of Irish dramatic comedy in her own plays. That eager-spirited and humorous lady, with the bright brown eyes of a watchful hawk, received us with all hospitality into her lovely house, though we came without introduction, and I had met her only occasionally in London crowds. Happily, the house stands back some distance from the road where the Black-and-Tans were wont to disport themselves, and the splendid stores of Irish

¹ These events were narrated in the *Irish Times* of December 1920, and that paper was certainly no friend to Sinn Féin. It risked prosecution, too, "for bringing the Crown forces into contempt." It did not occur to anyone to charge the Auxiliaries and Black-and-Tans with that offence.

literature and treasured memorials of official residence with her late husband in Ceylon were still untouched.

On November 22, rumours more terrible still came creeping to us bit by bit. On the road we met Bishop O'Doherty of Clonfert, but he told us only of the customary outrages and reprisals by British Forces. At Tuam we called on the Archbishop, a wise and clear-minded man, who was advocating a "Truce of God," but told us he had just heard a rumour of terrible events happening the day before in Dublin. No posts or trains were coming, but an obscure telegram of evil omen had arrived. Driving on, in gloomy expectation, through Claremorris and Kiltamagh, we were stopped and searched in the darkness of a moorland valley by a military patrol, whose officer (a Regular) told us an appalling story of many British officers murdered in their beds in Dublin two nights before. "All shot in the back, I'll undertake," he added, bitterly.

We were back in Dublin on November 24, three days after that "Bloody Sunday," when fourteen British Intelligence Officers, living in mufti about the city, had been murdered, some of them as they lay beside their wives; and when, in the afternoon, a force of Black-and-Tans had surrounded a vast gathering of spectators assembled to see a football match between Dublin and Tipperary in Croke Park, and had opened fire upon them, killing seventeen (General Sir Nevil Macready says ten) and wounding about fifty. It was two days later that the Irish scholar, Conor Clune, together with two of the Irish Volunteer officers, Peadar Clancy and Dick McKee, was murdered in Dublin Castle, probably as part of the reprisals.

Later on I took one of the first trains running to Belfast with James Good, so sensible, so excellent a journalist, and so intimate with that city, in which, though Limerick born, he had worked for many years. But just as I was trying to investigate the extreme labour distress in Belfast and was going round the Protestant and Catholic quarters into which

the city is strictly divided, I was instructed to join a Labour delegation that was visiting the south of Ireland. Arthur Henderson, William Adamson, Arthur Greenwood, General Thomson, and a few other Labour M.P.s came over, and I found them in Cork, which I reached from Belfast just in time before the hour of curfew, though a body of Black-and-Tans stopped A. P. Wadsworth, that excellent correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, and myself with revolvers as we drove to the hotel.

The Imperial Hotel will always be memorable to me because it was there that I was able to perform my "one good deed" for Ireland. In the morning, as five of the Labour delegates were starting for Bandon, ruined by the British forces, a poor fellow named O'Brien came to their motor's door, pouring out a complaint that "those ruffians" had wrecked and looted his little shop that night, terrifying the children of the two families living there out of their wits. Instantly an officer in khaki uniform, wearing three war medals, dashed down the hotel steps upon him from behind, put a revolver to his head, ran him to and fro, up and down the street, with the muzzle at his brain, dragged him into the hotel, and flung him on a bench, as though for immediate execution. When I expostulated that the man certainly did not intend personal insult, for he could not have seen the officer behind him, rage began to abate, and the officer contented himself with sending O'Brien off in a cart under charge of police. When I visited his little shop in the afternoon I found all the sweets and cakes had been carried off, the glass, pictures, piano, and every bit of furniture smashed to pieces. But what a welcome I received from the man himself, the two mothers living there, and all the ten children as being the deliverer of their life's mainstay!

On return to Dublin, I was secretly informed that the Auxiliaries were breathing out slaughters against me, as against Hugh Martin, and I evaded into Wales. Besides

my ordinary work in journalism, I spent the first months of 1921 in speaking about Ireland up and down the country, especially in opposition to the Government's policy of authorised reprisals, which were on the increase. The Government had then about 50,000 armed forces in Ireland, and Mr. Lloyd George announced that the number was to be increased, while Lord Birkenhead, as Lord Chancellor, informed the House of Lords that there existed "a small war" between Ireland and Great Britain, which it was the Government's intention to carry to the bitter end, no matter with what regret or with what loss. All expected a war like the South African, with drives and devastation and concentration camps. For Ireland was to be "re-conquered," as by the British invasions under Elizabeth and Oliver Cromwell.

Suddenly there came a healthful change, and one may attribute it in part to the King's courage in visiting Belfast for the opening of the Northern Parliament under the "Partition Act" (June 22). In his speech there he appealed to all Irishmen to pause, to hold out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and forget, and to join in making for the land which they all loved a new era of peace, contentment and goodwill. On this occasion it seems probable that King George exercised the same kind of influence that Queen Victoria had sometimes exercised. For, two days later, Mr. Lloyd George invited Sir James Craig and Mr. De Valera to meet in conference in London. Something may also be due to General Smuts, who held a brief consultation with Mr. De Valera in Dublin early in July.

For about a month secret conferences and discussions, chiefly by telegraph, continued between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. De Valera, who persisted in asserting Ireland's claim to sovereign independence, which the British Cabinet could not grant. When at last it was known that the proposed terms would be published and laid before the Dail, I crossed again to Dublin (August 14), and was sitting alone that Sunday

evening with "Æ.," when Countess Markievicz rushed in, bringing the news that Ireland was to have full Dominion status, with independent finance, limited military forces for home defence, her own police, and unity in Government if North and South could agree. Great Britain was to retain control of the Irish seas and air defence, with free trade between the countries, and Ireland was to contribute a share of the National debt. The Countess declared these proposals had already been rejected, and other women who came in supported her in joyful excitement at the prospect of continued conflict.

On August 16 I was present at the first meeting of the New Dail, held in the Round Room of the Mansion House, a ramshackle, circular hall, built originally to accommodate the drunken revels of George IV. The members took an oath to support and defend the Irish Republic and its Government. Professor John MacNeill was appointed Speaker, and opened the proceedings in the Irish language, which he understood, as did a few of the other members. Mr. De Valera then, adopting our common and comprehensible tongue, delivered what appeared to me a threatening and warlike address, declaring that the first duty of the Ministry was to establish a Republic, through which alone Irish freedom could be secured. It was evident to myself that his speech implied the rejection of the terms, though others continued hopeful. To me the one ray of hope was his assertion: "We are not Republican doctrinaires." But, unhappily, that was exactly what he and his most ardent supporters were. His speech next day upon the same scene only confirmed the apprehension of those who desired peace. It absolutely rejected the terms—for the doctrinaires had won. Mrs. Green, in the wisdom of her long and intimate experience of English political life, said to me that the brains of many people like Erskine Childers had been so long poisoned and strained that, for their own health, they ought to be shut up to rest. On the other hand, that wise Quaker, James Douglas,

and a few others, retained a hope which I as a downright Englishman could not understand.

On August 26, the Dail met again in the Round Room of the Mansion House to declare the solemn result of its secret consultations. At noon Mr. De Valera read the Dail's answer to the British Cabinet. It was a complete and absolute refusal of the terms, without a glimmer of hope, and at the end Mr. De Valera made a short speech of defiance, expressing the belief that the British Empire would end before the Irish conflict against it ended. Such sentiments were enthusiastically applauded, as violent sentiments always are. But grim despondency settled down on myself and all my friends—Mrs. Green, James Good, James Douglas, Diarmid Coffey, and all the rest, excepting only "Æ.," who has never despaired. Yet to some extent "Æ.'s" hope was justified. Mr. Lloyd George showed himself persistent, and, as I thought, even compliant in the cause of peace. Telegrams and letters of negotiation were still exchanged, and at last, with an invitation to a renewed conference on October 11, the Prime Minister stated that, though the Government definitely ruled out the supposition of an independent Republic, they would not now require a formal withdrawal of the claim from the Irish leaders. Rather strangely, as I still consider, Mr. De Valera appeared to regard this as a considerable concession, and on October 8, I went to Euston to cheer the new Irish delegates on arrival—Arthur Griffith, stable and wise, Michael Collins, wise and heroic, R. C. Barton, alert and humorous, Gavan Duffy, torn between logic and life, and E. J. Duggan, whom I had not known before.

A fortnight later, while the conference was still being carried on in secret, I sailed for the Washington Naval Conference, but my thoughts were not on it. All day long upon that voyage I was held in suspense according to the wireless news. There came the telegram from the Pope, praying that the negotiations might bring an end to the

age-long dissension between England and Ireland ; and then came Mr. De Valera's telegram to the Pope proclaiming that the Irish owed no allegiance to the British King, and had already announced their independence by a regular election to the Dail. Then came the Parliamentary debate upon the vote of censure on the British Government for its pacific policy in Ireland, supported by the Die-hard group. And just as I landed in New York, we heard the news of the vote's defeat by 439 to 43.

Still I remained in a torment of anxiety as week after week went by. That tiresome and almost obsolete Oath of Allegiance was said to be the stumbling-block, and on December 5 we heard in Washington that, owing to this difficulty, the conference in London had broken down. Then, the very next day, arrived the overwhelming news that the Treaty between Great Britain and Southern Ireland, now called "The Free State," had been actually signed. Unquestionably, that was one of the two happiest days of my life, the other being February 6, 1918, when the Woman Suffrage Bill was passed. I went about Washington possessed with joy, like unto those who dream, whose mouth is filled with laughter and their tongue with joy. I bought every paper in the streets that I might read the joyful telegram again.

Then, on December 8, we heard that a telegram had been received : "Renounce Treaty, De Valera." It was a lightning stroke, killing all our joy, and destined to set Ireland again in flame, but not to renew my own country's long centuries of disgrace.

CHAPTER XXVIII

“SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY”

I MUST GO BACK a few months to make my two visits to the United States hang together. For in the spring of 1920, on the strength of a welcome presentation contributed by imaginative men and women as a reward for imaginary services, I resolved to discover America. What sedentary person can imagine, what traveller forget, the first vision of that discovery. Gliding up the still waters of an estuary, passing the considerable Statue of Liberty, securely founded, it is said, upon a gaol, the traveller beholds suddenly revealed to him a dream-like city of romance, unequalled for grandeur by any covert that man has yet designed as a shelter against the wind and rain. Buildings grouped beside buildings rise to irregular but amazing height. They rise in all the beauty of simplicity, straight, and hardly touched by the defiling hand of ornament. It is a marvel that they could so stand. And from the midst of the solemn group rises a vast tower, higher than all the rest, and, as I approached I thought to myself : “ Surely it must be the Cathedral of this holy vision. For if there is any God to be worshipped in this dreamlike and undiscovered country, he must needs be worshipped there.” But it was the Woolworth Building, a purely commercial edifice, financed on sixpenny goods, and decorated with pseudo-Gothic elaboration.

Rather than generalise upon a foreign country—always so dangerous a task and the more difficult the more one knows—let me describe a few characteristic and pleasing scenes. It is rather unfortunate that in every great or famous city—

even in Rome and Athens—my first desire is to escape into the country around it, and imagine what nature there was like before the city rose. I did not find the citizens of New York particularly anxious to accompany me upon these little excursions. Perhaps they aimed at something more extensive, and certainly they had room for extension. Think what it must mean for youth—for male and feminine youth—to be able, almost at any season, taking stick and rucksack, to “hike” away from the city for hundreds or thousands of miles across their own continent, and all within range of their own language ; to seek out “pockets” of untouched settlers from our English Borderland of two hundred years ago, hidden in the Appalachian mountains, as Cecil Sharp found them ; to walk into the warm South, and converse with soft-tongued negroes ; to walk into the West and live with the last of the Indians, such craftsmen, such artists, such poets ; to walk into the North and find bears and moose and lesser deer at home ; to live in a land where humming-birds and egrets are still to be seen nesting and flying, and not putrefying on the heads of barbarous females ; to climb unknown peaks in the Rockies, and over the hills and far away to stare at the Pacific !

But for want of time I could not pursue those delights, and I found few pursuing them. Even on the railways, all Americans travel by night. It must be in order to avoid the advertisements that line the railroads. One would suffer much to escape those huge boards adjuring you to eat Gorton’s cod-fish (“No Bones !”) or to try one bottle of the Three-in-One Oil, or to “Watch Him Register” his pleasure in a cigarette, or to sleep with innocence in the “Faultless Nightgown.” But in the effort to escape one does suffer much. When welcome night has blotted out the advertisements, the travellers have to creep into little coverts, set in rows one above the other all along the length of the carriages, and shut off by heavy green curtains. To the top berths they climb by ladders, and to undress lying down in them

requires acrobatic skill. Through the long night they lie, stifling for want of air or blackened by dust and smuts that penetrate the ventilators. Heavily they sleep, or wakefully listen to the sorrows and wailings of a mother and baby above them or below, until in the dim morning a parti-coloured attendant gives notice of an approaching city, and it is time to crawl out, stumble up the carriage, colliding against male and feminine figures, and wash in the crowded cupboard at the end. After which, the parti-coloured attendant brushes each traveller down with a little besom, as a last viaticum, and each gives him twenty-five cents for the service. To such conditions are reduced the members of a race that rather prides itself on sanity.

Yet everyone was astonished when, being invited to speak upon England at the McGill University in Montreal, I actually went there by daylight ! For no one could tell me anything about the country between great cities, and I began to doubt if America had any country except Niagara, a few chasms, and a " park " or two ; but a park can never be country. For the benefit of American citizens I may record that, escaping from the random suburbs, which extend as far as Dobb's Ferry up the Hudson, and are characterised, like South Africa, by scrap-heaps of old iron, barbed wire, empty meat-tins, and abandoned boots, I passed up the left bank of the river, which there looks about four times the width of the Thames at Richmond. And so we came to Albany, where the New York State Legislature had just been passing laws to extinguish the last spark of liberty, in the hope that these laws would then be vetoed by Governor " Al " Smith ; which also happened. For State Legislatures take a fine pleasure in passing laws with the confident expectation that someone or other will stop them on the way. After Albany we entered a green and pastoral country of low hills and running streams, something like the quieter parts of Shropshire. White farms were scattered over it, and there was a good deal of plough and garden round them. As in

Holland, the cattle were chiefly black and white, of the breed called "Holstein," valued for their milk. The farm-houses were built of planks laid lengthwise ("clapboards," pronounced "clabbud," as "record" is pronounced "reccud," and "concord" "concud"), with picturesque green shutters. Frequent spinneys, copses, and woods supplied building material and fuel, the trees always thin and young.

As we advanced, the hills became higher, the streams more rapid, the country looking like the approaches to Switzerland or the foothills of the Jura. We had entered the beautiful State of Vermont, and those hills were the beginning of the Green Mountains. The trees here were chiefly fir, the streams almost torrents, the bridges roofed over with wood and covered in at the sides, like Swiss bridges. The chief industry was in timber, used, I supposed, as pulped to paper for the New York newspapers. The very air was sub-Alpine, abounding in the woodland smells that stir homesickness like a Swiss horn. Towards evening we skirted the shore of a long and beautiful lake, gradually extending to a width of many miles, and across it I could see far away the high outlines of the Adirondacks, still touched in May with snow. Beside the lake the plutocratic youth of New York, prompted by aspiration after barbarism, had established a Club where they might luxuriate in comfort and call it nature. For myself, as I looked across the water of Lake Champlain, I could but see visions of vanished races that once enjoyed the summer there, until the White Man's Burden fell and crushed them out. So in the early night I came to Montreal, and from a friend's high-placed house looked far into a deep blue distance across the orange lights that marked the city and the St. Lawrence. Further away still extended the unpeopled North, into which I longed to penetrate, but during my stay in Canada I could induce no one to accompany me. At that season the devouring black mosquitoes were thirsting for the blood of an Englishman,

and besides, two harmless travellers, anxious like me to behold the unpeopled world, had lately attempted to cross the wilds and were no more seen.

My next scene is one of contrast. After a night of shocks and crashes because the train was too heavy to start, I entered the dismal station of Chicago through a series of dismal suburbs. A pamphlet called *If Christ came to Chicago*, by W. T. Stead, was once widely approved ; but I thought if Christ came to Chicago when I did He would first have stopped the noise and then washed the city. Americans enjoy noise, for though they are leisurely and unbusinesslike people, they think noise is evidence of hustle and vitality. In Chicago they cultivate noise at its best, for the city specially prides itself on a business reputation. It is cut to pieces by shrieking and roaring railways, on the flat and overhead. The trams or " trolleys " are the most noisy in the world, because they rouse the echoes of the elevated railways above them. Along the east-side lies the cool and beautiful lake, then fringed with dust-heaps and rubbish roads, which I am told have since been beautified. But in the centre business reigned, and announced its conquest in shrieks and roars and dirt.

These characteristics may have been emphasised by the presence of the Convention assembled to select the Republican candidate for the Presidency. The headquarters of the various candidates were in the big hotels, and one could not miss them, so large were their advertisements and so chaotic the crowds swarming at the entrance, shouting in the halls, and fighting for the lifts. By " fighting " I mean no more than pushing and mobbing, for the Americans are good-tempered and inexhaustibly patient. The heat was considerable, never below 95 in the shade any day of the week, but I seldom heard one single damn, though in the two main hotels it was difficult to move for the crush.

The two centres of interest were (1) the National Committee where the wires were pulled, and (2) the Colliseum

(so spelt), where the figures danced. As to the scene in the Colliseum, I hardly knew whether to compare it to a football match in which the winner does not win, or to a Portuguese bull-fight in which it is pre-arranged that no man or horse or bull shall be hurt, but one man shall get a prize. The hall was said to hold 15,000 people, about a third more than the Albert Hall. On the ground floor sat the delegates, arranged according to States, the name of each State being fixed on a pole above the allotted seats. The crowding reporters also sat on the ground floor, in front of the delegates. Two vast galleries ran entirely round the hall, filled with privileged spectators. The platform was also vast and privileged. In front of it projected a large circular stand, like the turret of a battleship, and on this the main body of the National Committee were seated. From the turret again projected a gangway roped on either side, and suggesting a quarter-deck. There was a little table at the end of it, and beside the table the chairman and the speaker stood to address the delegates. Here also, at the beginning of each meeting, a clergyman uttered a prayer for Divine guidance. To ensure against Divine mistakes, a clergyman of a different denomination prayed each morning. An Episcopalian began, followed next day by a Cardinal in his scarlet robes, who was followed by a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and so on, by the various sects in turn, till the days of nomination, and perhaps the denominations, were exhausted.

On the first day, when an Episcopalian Bishop had prayed for guidance, and the Land of the Free had been celebrated in wavering song, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, a descendant of those fecund early explorers, but still better known as "Reservation" Lodge, was appointed Chairman, and called upon to make the "Keynote Speech." This he did with a mixture of platitudes and attacks upon President Wilson, both eagerly applauded. As is well known, he was a worthy gentleman of literary proclivities, and throughout the meeting he kept bringing down his hammer upon the table

with a decision that said, "That's another nail in Wilson's coffin!" Of course he dragged in Lincoln. Everybody dragged in Lincoln. Whenever there was a pause of an hour or two while the National Committee were rearranging the wires, and the shirt-sleeved athlete could not induce the wearied delegates to sing another note about John Brown's soul, a veteran of eighty-six was always put up ("head erect, paunch well out," as the reporters said of him) to talk about Lincoln, who with his own great hand had once patted that ageing head.

When the "Keynote Speech" had at last been read to the full stop, the nominations began, their order, it was said, being arranged by lot. No candidate might speak on his own behalf, or even appear on the platform. Three or four friends were selected to put his case, standing out upon the quarter-deck above described. For the first time in history, women were permitted to address the Convention, and as General Wood's lot jumped out first, a sister of Theodore Roosevelt was the first woman to speak to the delegates assembled. The speeches of all the women were good and brief, and it was a woman who won the applause of the week by proclaiming that her candidate had been born on Independence Day, July 4.

When the cheering and nominations were over, the balloting began, the delegates shouting out their votes, State by State, in alphabetical order. After ten or twelve ballots had been taken, it was found that the hearts of the delegates were set upon a Senator Warren Gamaliel Harding of Ohio, proprietor of the *Morning Star*, as the best possible guide and guard for their great nation. I was informed that this result was eminently satisfactory; that the sacred principles of Democracy were thus vindicated, and the ardent desire of the American nation happily attained.

Thoroughly enjoyable as was Chicago with its Convention and my residence in Hull House by invitation of Miss Jane Addams, I enjoyed far more my drive from Boston to visit

the quiet relics of Concord. There, lonely and desolate in a gloomy wood, stood Hawthorne's house, and desolate beside the road stood Louisa Alcott's. And there, beside the village green with its eighteenth-century church, stood Emerson's wooden dwelling, two-storied, white and green, the front windows boarded up because the American populace, in their zeal for the highest thought, kept smashing them to look inside. What strength and encouragement in my youth I had received from the idealistic but pellucid mind that once lived there, so rigorous in judgment, so obdurate against sentimentality and facile tradition ! A little way further on—only three or four miles away—I came to a scene more sacred and poignant still. For there, still deep in woods, lay the silent mirror of Walden Pond. The gipsy moth was slowly killing many of the trees, and some other plague was raising deadly blisters under the bark. But the circle of woods was still thick, silent, and untouched. The pool seemed to be about the size of Groby Pool in my own Charnwood Forest near Leicester ; the water calm and steely blue. A woodchuck came running to me down a pine, and I heard the "oven-bird" calling, and a few others whose notes I could not distinguish by name, as I could have distinguished them in England. There I sat long, for there was the place I had wished to visit more than any other in America. It was there that my friend Thoreau had lived, and there in loneliness had conceived the little book which to me is the most beautiful product that ever sprang from American soil, as he himself was the most beautiful and courageous nature. But I do him wrong to speak of his loneliness. Listen again to what he said :

"I have a great deal of company in my house ; especially in the morning when nobody calls. Let me suggest a few comparisons that some one may convey an idea of my situation. I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself. What company

has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters. The sun is alone, except in thick weather, when there sometimes appear to be two, but one is a mock sun . . . I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house.”¹

¹ *Walden* : chapter on “Solitude.”

CHAPTER XXIX

THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

WHILE THE NEGOTIATIONS for the Treaty with Ireland were still proceeding in London, as described in an earlier chapter (summer and autumn of 1921), I was sent by the *Manchester Guardian* as their special correspondent to the "Disarmament Conference" in Washington. If all the Powers represented at the Conference had been as friendly as the correspondents were, the delegates might have gone home after their first dinner. Every kind of untiring assistance was given me personally, not only by my colleagues, but by the telegraph clerks of the Western Union and the Marconi Wireless, though I usually plagued them with more than 1,000 words a day, and on some occasions with more than 3,000 words ; all written in fearful haste.

I always succeeded in obtaining amusement and sometimes instruction, by attending the assemblies of my fellow journalists, all eager for information. In the United States the journalist is held in no contempt, and the highest "personages" in the country are willing not merely to regard him as an inevitable nuisance, but even to assist his humble endeavours to arrive at the truth. On one and sometimes two afternoons a week, President Harding received us in a large circular chamber of the White House, and would consider questions already written down, or even oral. The written questions he would pile together and answer in turn, his answer being sometimes explicit, but usually vague and mumbled almost unintelligibly, dying away in a low and inarticulate growl, like the Duke's conversation in Chesterton's play, *Magic*. He seemed to

me a man of no great intelligence, but in his public pronouncements, both at the Conference and in Congress, I recognised a master of platitude and a creator of serviceable words, such as "normalcy," "involvements," and "mutuality," that have passed into the American language.

In courteous emulation of the President, Mr. Balfour once agreed, I am sure much against his will, to receive the correspondents in the large hall of the British Embassy. We all sat around in excited crowds as in an amphitheatre, and presently Mr. Balfour advanced into the arena, attended by Sir Auckland Geddes as guide or keeper. After a few words conceived and delivered with his irresistible tact and charm, he asked if anyone wished to have any point made clear, so far as clearness lay in his power. At once the darts began to fall from every side, and Mr. Balfour turned this way and that to receive them. Two may be remembered as characteristic : first, "What's the reaction of the British Navy to the ratio of equality?" I suppose Mr. Balfour had not then learnt the meaning of "reaction" in the American tongue, as implying little more than "opinion"; or perhaps the question was too far-reaching, for he adroitly evaded an answer. Still more perplexing, was the question: "Say, Lord Balfour, what's the population of the British Empire?" Like the boy in Calverley's poem, Mr. Balfour smiled and looked politely round to catch a casual suggestion, but made no effort to propound any solution of the question. He was led away, and the tormenting experience was never repeated.

The actual Conference was preceded by a day of mourning over the burial of an "Unknown Hero," whose poor bones had been brought across the ocean from France. They were deposited with great ceremony in the beautiful military cemetery on the height above Washington called Arlington, where Robert E. Lee dwelt before he joined the Southern Army in the Civil War. I then noticed some interesting points in a patriotic interment that has now become almost commonplace. At the very end of the long military and

official procession I saw a simple carriage in which was seated ex-President Woodrow Wilson, who three years before had held the world in his hand, and now was hardly rational and of no account, though cheered by a kindly populace. On the top row of the amphitheatre, facing the stage of classic marble, I sat next to H. G. Wells, and reflected how far the greatest intellect in all that swarming throng was possessed by the short, rather ordinary, and quite unnoticed figure beside me. Then after all the platitudinous rhetoric, magnified and widely distributed by vast "amplifiers," I enjoyed like music the silence of Lord Beatty as he laid a cross—I think the Victoria Cross—on the unknown bones, and the brevity of Lord Cavan, who said only "As unknown and yet well known ; as dying and behold he lives." But most significant of all to me was the presence of a small body of Veterans who had fought in the Civil War. Hoary-bearded and feeble they were, some still wearing the old blue cloaks and peaked caps that I had seen in ancient illustrations. There they stood, men who had known Sheridan and Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson and Ulysses Grant and Lincoln. And now after sixty years they had almost faded out, and so had the reasons for which they fought and saw thousands of their friends killed around them. That evening the public parks and buildings were brilliantly illuminated with sparkling stars, and stripes of coloured gleams, thrown upwards from the searchlights. The population paraded the walks and streets, shouting with astonished exultation at the artificial radiance, and a morning paper reported, "The Whole City was Drenched in Tears."

Next day, when the citizens had dried their eyes, the first Plenary Session of the Conference was held in the classic marble building known as the Hall of the Daughters of the Revolution. Senators, members of the House of Representatives, distinguished visitors, journalists, the American Advisory Committee (a well-intentioned but futile body, including old Mr. Gompers, who was called the Labour

leader because he held the views of a moderate Liberal like Mr. Asquith), and the various delegations around a central square were duly arranged in suitable positions. The President entered, all standing, and read a long address, conceived in the most telling spirit of platitude, which was loudly applauded by the galleries.

When the President had withdrawn, Mr. Balfour proposed that Mr. Charles Hughes, as Secretary of State, should be elected Chairman. There was no opposition, and Mr. Hughes took his seat upon a facsimile of the chair in which the Declaration of Independence was signed. In passing, I may mention the amazing skill of the official interpreter, who after each speech repeated it immediately word for word in the opposite language, English or French, reproducing even the gestures and intonations of the speaker who had just sat down.

The Secretary of State's proposals had been carefully prepared, and I still believe their terms were then unknown to all the delegates, including the British. I have no reason to suppose that Mr. Balfour was lying when he said they were unknown. They were certainly astonishing. But far more astonishing to myself was their reception by the British delegates. All average Englishmen like myself had been cradled to the song "Rule Britannia!" and educated reciting "Ye mariners of England"; "Britannia needs no bulwarks." "The meteor flag of England shall still terrific burn!" and similar assertions of naval superiority. But here was a foreigner proposing an absolute equality in battleships with the flag that had braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze! How, then, should Britannia rule the waves, while the stormy winds do blow? Surely the spirits of our fathers would start from every wave at the mere rumour of such a dastardly suggestion! Yet within a few hours the British Naval Delegation issued the official judgment that Mr. Hughes's scheme was "bold and conceived in a statesmanlike spirit!"

Astonishment at Britannia's meekness was only increased

when, three days later, Mr. Balfour rose at the second plenary, and in forty brief minutes announced that the American proposals were accepted by the British Government, "not with cool approbation, but with full, loyal, and complete co-operation." "We have considered your scheme with admiration and approval," he calmly remarked, speaking almost without notes, and holding the lapels of his frock-coat, unperturbed as though opening a flower-show; "we agree with its spirit and purpose as making the greatest reform ever carried out by courage and statesmanship." The depth of emotion hidden, as is happily the English way, beneath that cool and sceptical appearance, was for a moment revealed. The whole audience rose, cheering and clapping their hands as at a dramatic performance, and Mr. Balfour had won for England a position of favour and confidence that was never lost.

Admiral Kato rose next, speaking in Japanese and uttering sounds without a visible movement of his lips, as courtesy demands in the most refined circles of Japan. His countenance was like that of Buddha in meditation, the watchful eyes hardly seen through the narrow slit apertures, the cheeks sunken, the skin an ivory yellow. Thin, grave, and immobile he stood, more like a melancholy ascetic than a jolly jack tar, and he murmured sounds that his own interpreter said implied a general approval, though with certain unnamed reservations. For Japanese skill in diplomacy lies in the art of saying yes and no at the same moment.

M. Briand spoke briefly, but reserved his great effort for the third Plenary, some days later (November 21). Then, indeed, he poured upon the excited audience the full stream of Gallic rhetoric, shaking his fingers before his eyes, swinging his whole body to the cadence of his undulating periods, and with both arms raised above his head appealing to the stars to witness the cruel wrongs that France had suffered. Perhaps all that gesticulation was necessary in addressing an audience delighting in rhetoric and understanding barely

one word in a thousand of the language, but always inclined to applaud anything French in memory of Lafayette's services during the War of Independence. As the sections of the speech were in turn interpreted, the applause gradually diminished, for it was then understood that the orator, while expatiating upon the sufferings of his country, was violently denouncing both Germany and Russia for their supposed warlike designs against France and Poland. So imminent and threatening did these appear to him that France could not permit the smallest reduction of her armies. Germany might then suppose that France was "morally isolated," and in one swinging period after another M. Briand, as Premier of France, destroyed the clause in the Agenda of the Conference which had aimed at reduction of land forces.

It was noticed—it could not but be noticed—that though the orator praised and thanked the United States for assistance to France in her peril, he said not a single word of thanks or praise for England's help, which had preserved France from utter destruction at the first onset of the war. When the eloquent display was finished at last, Mr. Balfour quietly rose, expressed his admiration and sympathy, but "sorrowfully admitted that the speech was not conducive to a reduction of land armies." And he added, "If M. Briand's fears of moral isolation were realised, it would be a tragedy indeed. But if the cause of international liberty required from England—from England—a similar sacrifice as the last resistance to domination, or if our ally were similarly threatened, she would find the warmth of our sympathy had not grown cold." With that politely ironic supplement Mr. Balfour allowed the obvious insult to pass.

In spite of all my distracting business, life in Washington had its brief alleviations. The *Baltimore Sun*, that excellent paper, combined with the *Manchester Guardian* and the *New York World* to take my telegram on the Conference. But my first personal connection with it was a festival given by its generous proprietors to all the correspondents who had come

for the Conference. This kind of festival is called a "Barbecue." When I first heard that name I thought it was some kind of animal, perhaps a porcupine. But I was wrong. One Sunday morning I found myself seated in a motor with four or five other journalists, rushing northward from Washington along a straight road, thirty similar motors in front of us, and thirty-one behind. Police upon motor-cycles ran before us, or to and fro up and down the line, guiding and guarding this unprecedented procession of brains. Like an enormous snake, we passed with speed beyond the little District of Columbia, in which Washington stands, into the wide State of Maryland—"My Maryland!" as an old song used to run when men were killing each other there.

After about forty miles, our *cortège* reached an old estate surrounding a large house of solid stone, owned by the chief proprietor of the *Baltimore Sun*, who welcomed us, motor by motor, at the porch. At his side was ranged a row of Red Indians in all the romantic finery of eagle feathers, wampum belts, and scarlet breeches. I did not observe tomahawks or scalps, but one Chieftain held a glorious Pipe of Peace, which he afterwards presented to our host, at the same time honouring him with the proud title of "Pretty Eagle." The Indians had come from North Dakota, chiefly to lay the symbol of victory upon the bier of that Unknown Hero at Arlington. But now each of the row, with immovable countenance, limply shook hands with each of us three hundred journalists in turn. To be the Last of the Mohicans is not a happy lot.

Out in the open field a large trench-fire was blazing, fed by forest logs. And over the flames hung in chains a huge mass of roasting flesh, dropping odours, dropping fats. It was the Barbecue! Not, as I had fondly supposed, a fretful porcupine, but all that was mortal of a gentle ox. From its charred and burning edges were suspended the corpses of rabbits that had not belonged to it in life, and a further warren of rabbits sizzled inside. From time to time, fragments, black and red, were hewn off the carcase and

distributed among the guests, to be devoured in the fingers. That is the feast of Barbecue, a word of uncertain origin, possibly Indian, but more probably French, because the animal is roasted "from chin to tail." For those of us less accustomed to the forest primeval, platters of cold turkey and more familiar delights were plentifully supplied, with all the accompaniments of progressive civilisation except knives. In a neighbouring shed, another produce of progress flowed in similar profusion, rather excessive for some who had not advanced so far along the ringing grooves of time.

Around the feasting guests wandered at large a happy group of negroid singers summoned from Richmond, where they habitually met among themselves to recall the ancient songs of "Swanee River" and "Way down in Tennessee," such as ancestral slaves used to sing when their African music was forgotten. Then, upon a vast waving meadow, we beheld the kind of life habitual in the Wild and Woolley West, where gallant youths whirl the lissome lasso, and gallant girls gallop upon every part of a horse but his back. So, as the sun declined, having like homeric heroes sated our desire for meat and drink, we said farewell to the "Pretty Eagle," with hearty gratitude for his unimagined hospitality, and withdrew to the procession of cars again, leaving but few of our number (and those chiefly Japanese), "parked out," as it were, like stationary motors upon the comfortable maize straw of a booth, happy object-lessons in the value of Prohibition.

The day after Christmas I was writing in the Cosmos Club when a telephone call told me that Eugene Debs was at the Department of Justice and "longed" to see me. Debs was the best-known, and most loved Socialist in America, and had been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for a speech against the war. He was released after he had served not quite three years. Hastening round, I met Debs just emerging from an interview with Mr. Daugherty the Attorney-General, who afterwards did nothing to increase the credit of President

Harding's Cabinet. I beheld a tall thin man of seventy or more, quite bald, with prominent hooked nose, deep-sunken grey eyes, the whole head like an animated skull ; hands remarkably large, with long loose fingers perpetually in motion, spread out wide or gathered together into a point at every sentence. He was dressed in the ludicrous regulation suit supplied to ex-convicts by the paternal State. Hearing who I was, he rushed upon me, and not observing my outstretched hand, flung both arms round my neck in a fraternal embrace. I endured, as an Englishman may, but all the time I heard the click of cameras and the whirring of a cinema in action, and I felt sure that " Eugene Debs salutes the *Manchester Guardian* " would be the " caption " to the film.

He invited me to meet him again in the bedroom of an hotel, and there I found that his endearing reception of myself had not been a peculiar honour. For one friend after another, beginning with Mr. Gompers, veteran leader of the American Federation of Labour, kept crowding in, and he greeted all, men and women alike, with similar affectionate embraces, clinging long to their hands, in such joyful excitement as was natural after nearly three years of isolation in gaol. His was indeed a friendly and emotional nature, and I felt that he would gladly have taken all humanity to his bosom, including even the Attorney-General.

CHAPTER XXX

“BUT O THE HEAVY CHANGE!”

“‘As though the emerald should say, Whatever happens I must be emerald.’ From of old that saying of Marcus Aurelius has been in my thoughts, and now, as the tide of life recedes and I am left more and more alone, it has sunk deeper than ever and even becomes endeared.”

HAVELOCK ELLIS : “ Impressions and Comments ”
Second Series, page 106.

LIKE HAVELOCK ELLIS, as the tide of life recedes, I am left more and more alone. My friends and enemies, especially those who knew me when I was young, are rapidly departing. In the two or three years after the Washington Conference one after another left me, and the death of an enemy brings a sense of bereavement and of the transitoriness of life almost as keen as the death of a friend. What surprises me is the gemlike hardness with which the mind endures the departing of enemy or friend. “ To part from you is like parting from life itself ! ” said a loving and most lovable woman, dying as I sat beside her, and I knew the love and sorrow half revealed in the words. But from the high-set window I was looking across a gorge of the Arve to the snow-tipped barrier of the Jura, most beautiful of mountain lines, and I longed to rush out again into the splendour of nature, and the full course of human activity. That hardness of heart may serve, like irony, as a protection and covering for defence under which we may hide, just as a hermit crab hurries to conceal its softness in an alien shell. But the callousness of the indwelling spirit is amazing, though perhaps universal.

Thus for myself, as the tide of life receded, leaving me

more and more alone through the death of so many friends, valuable to me and in some cases to the whole country, I drove heaviness away and welcomed every opportunity of increased activity, knowing that the time was short. I also began to put together some record of a few among the people I had known, and the events at which I had been present. But a journalist can find time for the writing of books only in the intervals of his work for livelihood and those are few and brief. Twice in 1922 I was sent again to Ireland owing to the atrocious civil war which the Irish, by a fine use of what grammarians used to call "*meiôsis*," speak of later as "the troubles" or "the crossness." As our ship touched at Queenstown on my return from Washington, in February 1922, I had rejoiced to see the Irish flag flying from the harbour's central fort, and in March I rejoiced again to see it flying over Dublin Castle itself, that symbol of ancient subjection, while at the gates Irish sentries, in brand-new uniforms of dark green, strutted to and fro, trying hard to turn about in military fashion, as no one but a soldier ever thinks of turning round. Through the big railings in front of the Bank, little crowds stood perpetually gazing at the Irish soldiers, as at lions in a cage; and indeed the soldiers were to me far more amazing than any lions. The British army had almost gone. The centuries of "The Garrison" were over. Ten years before, who would not have smiled sadly at the mere suggestion of such a change?

But behind those emblems of deliverance, I felt the approaching spectre of that most horrible form of murder—the mutual murder of brothers born. Speaking at various places in Southern Ireland, Mr. de Valera had foretold that for the cause of the Republic "they might have to fight over the bodies of their own countrymen, and wade through the blood of the Irish Government's soldiers." After the thrills and excitements of the last few years, it was difficult for anyone of Irish spirit to settle down into the monotonous paths of peace. As "*Æ*," wrote at the time: "We are at

present dominated by the military mind, which has many fine qualities, like courage and self-sacrifice, but is generally the most stupid and pig-headed kind of mind for anything except self-sacrifice."

In June, Southern Ireland declared for the Treaty by a majority of twenty-two against the Republicans returned at the elections, but the civil war was only intensified. At the end of June, I was again sent to Dublin to witness the first meeting of the Dail under the new Constitution. But instead I witnessed the siege of the Four Courts, which had been held since April by Rory O'Connor and a party of Republicans without much interference from the Government troops. The attack was then mainly hastened by a speech of Mr. Winston Churchill (June 26), threatening the termination of the Treaty unless order were restored. Firing in the streets was heavy, especially along the Liffey, where the Government had stationed field-guns to shell the Four Courts. Soon after midday on July 7, a loud explosion shook the neighbourhood; the Republicans had ignited a mine inside the Courts, and that beautiful classic building went up in smoke and flame. A few hours afterwards I went clambering among its ruins. In three places the flames still roared over the ceilings and beams. The great dome of green copper had almost melted away. Thick columns of smoke rose upon the wind, bearing half-consumed fragments of legal and valuable historic documents far across the city. Now and again another arch or wall came crashing down, and at the south-east corner gaped the breach battered by the Government's four guns.

All the streets and squares were lively with death. Unexpectedly I came upon houses with windows and doors barricaded and sandbagged, rifles sticking out of the loopholes like almonds in a tipsy cake. Here and there I caught sight of "Irregulars" lurking behind a chimney-stack, just waiting for a shot at anyone who seemed suitable game. To return a cycle I had borrowed from Stephen Gwynn, I

ran up the steps of one of the great Clubs on St. Stephen's Green, and, finding the door locked, peered through the glass. There I perceived the muzzle of a large revolver separated from my own muzzle only by the thickness of the glass, and behind the revolver the white and haggard face of a poor boy, worn with nerves and sleeplessness, his tired and hungry eyes expressing anything but welcome. I smiled and waved adieu with my lily hand. He did not smile, nor even wave the revolver.

Late the same night, I was returning to the Standard Hotel from a visit to Mrs. Green, who had been round the streets with a paste-pot, sticking up manifestoes for the Free State in hopes of counteracting the ceaseless propaganda of turmoil. Just as I was turning into Harcourt Street a motor-lorry, full of Irish soldiers, dashed across in front of me, and instantly, from the next house but one at the opposite corner, a large bomb was thrown. It exploded with horrible noise in the middle of the road, and violent rifle fire followed. Bullets, fragments of shell, and bits of granite, chipped from the pavement, came whistling around me, and if any other civilians beside myself had been near, probably some would have fallen. For a moment I remembered the prophecy of my friend Philip Gibbs, who had foretold in a recent book that I should meet my end from a bullet on the streets of Dublin. But I escaped as usual, and was amused to find the guests in the hotel seeking a vain shelter behind the bar—and that a teetotal bar!

So the atrocious struggle continued, until, in the very next month, and within little over a week (August 13 and 22) the double blow fell upon the country. Arthur Griffith died, and Michael Collins was killed in a wretched skirmish. Men of opposite and complementary characters they were. Arthur Griffith was described to me by Mrs. Green as "a granite monolith," and indeed there was something granite in his steadfast and unflinching devotion to his own great idea; something granite in his silence and his freedom from

all the popular arts of exuberant rhetoric and open-hearted humour. But the comparison reminded me also of the cromlechs so abundant in Wales. For, besides the aloofness and solitude of a Druid stone, he seemed to have inherited from some Welsh ancestor a touch of the seclusive or secretive nature of the Welsh people. Very different was the temperament of Michael Collins, whom I had seen two years before eluding his arrest as by magic, when a vast reward was offered for his body, dead or alive. Yet, within that short time, less than a year since the signing of the Treaty, he had won by his personal charm and cheerful courage such affectionate admiration that his death was lamented in England by every paper, I think without exception. And now, just when the need of two such men in Ireland was at its height, both within a few days were gone. "*Breves et infaustos populi Romani amores*," said Tacitus. Short-lived and ill-starred have been the darlings of the Irish people, too.

In September 1922, I was invited by the London School of Economics to accompany a large party of students and professors to Vienna, where I was to lecture at the University upon the Washington Conference. I spoke in a great hall to a crowded audience of men and women, who astonished me by listening with obvious understanding, not only to my English but to my German as well; and next morning I received the honour of a long report in the *Neue Freie Presse*, and a description of my discourse as "*sympathisch und schlicht*"—the latter word implying pretty much what our artists mean by "slick." What English audience of such size could have listened to a German speech with that understanding for a whole hour? But, indeed, the strangest thing about Vienna was the tenacity with which she clung to her ancient reputation for "culture."

Austria was a decapitated or mutilated country. Her limbs had been hewn off by the atrocious Treaty of St. Germain, while the head continued to retain its habitual smile. In the Roman's fable, the belly languished when the members

struck work, but here the head was isolated, not only from the members, but from the belly itself. Vienna, so lately the capital of a great and diverse Empire, had now no visible means of subsistence. She had not even money to eat, except the few pence that Jewish dealers from Holland doled out in exchange for ancestral jewels and works of art. The krone had sunk till a tram-fare had the nominal value of £40, and a few days later of £68. Bread at the nominal value of the krone cost £190 a pound, and it cost a woman £1,600 to have her hair "undulated." Thrift had become a vice; speculation a virtue; and the good honest citizen who, by eating the bread of carefulness so highly recommended by economists, had saved enough to live in luxury upon £5,000 a year till his life's end, now discovered that for six weeks and no more, could he live upon the bread of carefulness without butter, and then must die. To this were reduced the officials on fixed incomes, the pensioners, and the army officers lately so proud. In an establishment, founded and endowed by the old Emperor for the widows of distinguished generals, sixty old ladies were trying their best to exist upon the purchasing value of 7s. 6d a week between them. I found them starving and shivering in aristocratic silence, and but for the small and persistent aid of our English Quakers they would have starved and shivered out of this democratic world.

Speaking of the city's condition, a wit described it as "Hopeless but not serious." Two forms of productive activity still flourished. At a street corner one heard the ceaseless hum of the Government's printing machines, by day and night striking off worthless notes to a value beyond astronomical calculation. And whenever I returned from an excursion into the surrounding country, I was accompanied by crowds of men and women carrying knapsacks and baskets crammed with all the kindly earth's produce that they had been able to grub or snatch from neighbouring farms and gardens. Can a minus quantity be counted as a

lucrative occupation? If so, there was a third: for all workers lived rent-free, the house-owners being only too glad if a tenant merely kept the houses from falling down, as many fell.

All that year (1922) I had been writing every week for Massingham's *Nation*, and for the *Baltimore Sun*, besides writing several articles for the *Manchester Guardian*, and tucking bits of my book into any interstices that journalism offered. During the summer my old friend and colleague in adventure, H. N. Brailsford, was wisely selected by the Independent Labour Party as editor for their projected weekly, the *New Leader*—wisely because no journalist had a finer perception of advanced Labour policy, or more accurate knowledge of the European situation. By his own incisive style and his sensitive appreciation of the great arts, he quickly made it one of the most vital and interesting of weeklies—a paper to be read not only by professedly Labour people, but by all men and women of intelligence; and that kind of success was, I suppose, the main reason why the Executive Committee of the I.L.P. discharged him from his position as editor four years after his first number appeared (in October 1922). But from that first number until the Party's decree was issued against him (October 1926), I wrote for his paper almost every week whenever I was in England, so that, during its early months, what with the *Nation*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *New Leader*, and a good deal of outside work, I was kept pretty busy.

Up to the very beginning of 1923, "all went well." Then indeed the crash came. I was in Wales, and rather irritated with Massingham for altering an article I had written for him on Matthew Arnold. But it was only the usual journalistic irritation, and next week I sent him a phantasy on the fortunate appearance of Handel's ghost to conduct a performance of his "Samson" at Dolgelley, when the conductor had been delayed by a flooded stream. I was doubtful about so unusual a subject, and all the more delighted when he

returned the proof with the word "Charming" written by his own hand on the top. From him any compliment was rare, but this one was characteristic. For he was just in the midst of the crisis that drove him from his high position as editor, and yet he found time to be gracious.

On the very next day (January 10, 1923), I read without warning that he had been compelled to resign from the *Nation*. The chief proprietors, a wealthy Quaker firm, appeared to him, and still appear to me, to have acted with a secretive diplomacy, wanting in the frank and open-hearted consideration due to the man who alone had created their paper and raised it to an unusual height of influence. I need not enter into their private motives, partly financial, mainly, I think, personal. But on public grounds they could plead political justification, for they were patriarchal Liberal capitalists on a big scale, and it had become obvious that Massingham was beginning to despair of Liberalism under such leadership as then prevailed, or in part prevailed, and was tending more and more decisively to the Labour cause.

One cannot expect wealthy owners to continue paying for a paper and losing money over it, no matter how wealthy they may be, when the policy of their paper is gradually diverging from their own. Yet a paper is a kind of public-house, and if the proprietors had owned a public-house (an incredible hypothesis, for I believe most Quakers are teetotallers) and a clever manager had raised it to extraordinary eminence in the neighbourhood, would he not, in equity at least, have been able to claim some Tenant Right, some Compensation for Improvement, some Right of Option to Purchase? It appears to me, who am no lawyer, that a man who has created a great paper and run it for sixteen years with extraordinary success, ought not to be flung aside like a dirty rag, no matter how far he may be in advance of the owners' opinions. What we who had worked on the *Nation* Staff—in some cases, like my own,

for the full sixteen years—thought of the matter was proved when the whole number of us (with the exception of one literary man, who had only lately joined) resigned in a body, to our great financial and personal loss.

More important, more disastrous, was the effect of the blow upon our editor himself. H. M. Tomlinson, since famous as a descriptive writer, but for some years his assistant editor, and intimate with him to the last, has written :

“ If the *Nation* had been mine, I would not have changed it for a fleet of *Shamrocks* and the American cup. I would have valued it at more than ten new bays to a factory. There was not in the world, I used to imagine fondly, another review of quite the distinction and quality of the *Nation* ; and certainly there was not one to equal it in its power to raise both furious enmity and grateful approval. But the Liberals cast Massingham because candour may be regarded as an uncomfortable shoe. A cosy notion, for there are plenty of boot-shops. But I know how the proof that he was not wanted shook him, in spite of his gay acceptance of defeat. . . . He did not want to go. The *Nation* was his creation, but he had to leave it as though it were a grocer’s shop, and he was the retiring manager. His jokes about it were outrageous. But he was badly wounded, for he was as tender-hearted as a sentimental girl. . . . It was assumed that he was hard, bright, and ruthless. But one morning, after his severance was announced, I went into his room, and he stood at his desk brooding. There were tears in his eyes. ‘ Read that,’ he said, fiercely thrusting a letter at me. It was from J. L. Garvin. ‘ I’ve spent my life for the Liberals, and here we are and they don’t care. But that man,’ he said, pointing to Garvin’s letter, ‘ I’ve gone out of my way to mock.’ ”¹

¹ *H. W. M.*, pp. 123–126. J. L. Garvin was then, and, happily, still is editor of the *Observer*, a Sunday paper mainly devoted to supplying the Unionist Party with brains.

The blow was fatal to that English heart, hard and bright as the emerald in outward seeming, but over-sensitive in its depths. On April 28, 1923, he parted from his *Nation* with the noble article called "Vale," and we of his staff all contributed articles, signed, and our last. For some months he strove to maintain his amazing buoyancy, writing for the *Spectator* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, and struggling with scraps of reminiscence. But on opening the *Northern Whig* at Derry on my way from Letterkenny to Cushendun (August 29, 1924), I saw his sudden death announced, with an appreciation by T. P. O'Connor. Till that day he had been present among us, and I could say to myself, "Thank God, one man lives who will always fight for the noble, the honourable, the unpopular cause whatever happens!" But now he had gone, leaving the world duller and more exposed to the devastating atmosphere of the commonplace.

He died at sixty-four, and to me who had known him as well as a member of a Staff can know his editor, and as an admirer can know one who has always held aloof and remained isolated in the depths of his nature, it was not difficult to estimate the qualities which gave him his power, making him the object of so much devotion and obloquy. In brief, they were an absolute sincerity, an incapacity to conceal his real opinion; reliance upon conviction, regardless of Government tactics, Ministerial appeals, and popular outcries; an entire indifference to worldly success, to all the tempting amenities of Society, and the comfortable allurements of the rich and great; a vital rapidity of decision, but a readiness to confess an error due to impetuous judgment, especially in estimating the value of men he had valued too high. In his obituary notices much space was given to eulogies upon his vivid and trenchant style. For myself, I have never bothered about a man's style. I seldom notice it unless it is bad. What I do notice is the man revealed beneath the style—the man who is the style. Of course, Massingham wrote well. He could

not help it, being what he was, so passionate, so sensitive, so indignant at cruelty and injustice, so perceptive of all beauty, whether of sound or sight or sense, and so humorous besides. It was his nature to write well.

CHAPTER XXXI

“VAE VICTIS VAE VICTORIBUS”

I HAVE often wondered which man has most nearly reached the utmost height of human happiness. Sometimes I have inclined to fix on one, sometimes on another—a great composer conducting his own symphony, a great dramatist witnessing his own drama, a great architect watching his temple rise, a great scientist discovering the cause of malaria or exploring the origins of mankind. But after long hesitation I have concluded that the man who has really been the happiest in all human history was M. Poincaré in the year 1923. Happiness lies in the fulfilment of function, the conquest of difficulties, the satisfaction of desire. M. Poincaré's function was statecraft, which he fulfilled ; his difficulty was England, which he overcame ; his desire was the ruin of Germany, which he accomplished. When at the end of that year he rested from his labours and his works followed him, was ever happiness to be compared with his ?

From the first, fate smiled upon his purpose. Early in 1922 he had succeeded M. Briand as Premier and Foreign Secretary. Throughout that year England was much occupied with her own affairs and her Government's failures. Largely owing to French opposition to all compromise, M. Poincaré began repeating his dogma that only by the occupation of the Ruhr could reparations be secured and the “will to pay” be enforced upon the German mind.

In the last week of December 1922, the Reparations Commission (the British representative dissenting) reported

“voluntary default” in German deliveries of timber, paving stone, and a small percentage of coal. The French Ironmasters’ Association (*Comité des Forges*) redoubled their insistence upon the Ruhr occupation, because by the hoped-for extra supply of free coal and coke, they could crush German rivalry and destroy the competition of English coal and iron, which, owing to the free supplies of reparations, were already suffering in the same manner as British ship-building. That process had begun which led *The Times* to write later on (November 28, 1923), that “the French can drive British steel and metallurgical products out of every neutral market, and swamp our home markets.” Yet it was not merely the impending loss to vital branches of our commerce and manufacture that roused the opposition of all parties in the country, and every important newspaper but one or perhaps two. It was against the illegality and unwisdom of the Poincaré policy that the nation protested, and if at that time the Prime Minister had spoken with the energy displayed by Lord Curzon as Foreign Secretary in the following summer (especially in the Note to France and Belgium, of August 11), it is possible that the crime would never have been perpetrated.

Unhappily, Mr. Bonar Law, pledged to tranquillity, and already perhaps conscious of the physical weakness that led to his resignation in the following May, was not strong enough to overcome M. Poincaré’s determination at the Paris Conference of the first week in January. The French Premier, almost without a thought, rejected his suggestions of a moratorium and definite fixture of the reparation sum, and then poor Mr. Bonar Law retired to London with a feeble promise of “benevolent neutrality” towards an action which he himself and nearly the whole of his country condemned. It was as though a villa resident should say, “I really disapprove of your intention to kill our neighbour, though I did have a serious quarrel with him lately. But if you insist upon the murder please go ahead. You may

climb my garden wall to do it, and I will look the other way.” So M. Poincaré accepted the “*rupture cordiale*” with indifferent gratitude, climbed the garden wall, and committed the murder at leisure.

His hands being free, M. Poincaré wisely struck quickly and hard. On January 11, the French invaded the Ruhr with overwhelming military force. The pretence was the protection of certain technicians, engineers, and customs officers there engaged in perfect safety ; but M. Poincaré’s object was no such petty and transient an affair. His desire was the ruin and depopulation of a country already defeated, nearly ruined, and reduced to extremity by war, sickness and famine. While the old enemy was weak, disarmed, poverty-stricken, and isolated, he resolved to strike once more and make an end. Happy in opportunity, he saw that no one was able or willing to interrupt his purpose. America gathered her skirts about her, threatened to withdraw her troops from the Rhine, and did so at once. There was a party in England which called upon our Government to do the same, but, fortunately, better counsels prevailed and the small British force remained, standing in the opinion of all Germans as their one hope of justice. Otherwise, M. Poincaré felt himself able to follow out the fine old-fashioned way of dealing with any enemy when he is down, and by attacking a helpless people in peace-time with all the resources of the greatest army in the world, he conceived himself able to accomplish his desire with extraordinary and rapid success. I often wished that I had been a French politician myself, so that I might rejoice in the spectacle I then witnessed. But my part was the humbler one of increasing M. Poincaré’s happiness by recording the extent of his triumph.

At the end of January, I was sent to write upon the conditions in great cities of Germany outside the Ruhr, and accordingly I went straight to Berlin. Here, as in Vienna, the professional classes were ruined. When people are hungry they cease to pay for art or music or learning or law

or religion or even medicine. Food is the only thing that counts. Here, too, as there, thrift had become a thoughtless imprudence, and "independent incomes" had faded to nothingness. It was pitiful, wherever I went among German cities, to hear of distinguished, hard-working, and highly educated men and women living as long as they could by selling their bits of possessions, and, when the last was sold, turning on the gas or cutting their throats. One day I invited an eminent man who had been German Ambassador in various Courts to lunch at my little hotel, and prepared the very best that expenditure could supply—thick soup, real beefsteak, potatoes, real jam, real bread and butter, beer up to strength, and coffee—real coffee. His purely physical enjoyment of the food and drink was enough to make the angels weep. It was pitiful to think that the hand of Joy was already at its lips bidding adieu, and that within a few hours all that ecstasy would become but a fading remembrance.

There were four of us, and I suppose the entertainment cost nearly half a crown a head. At that time (February 1923) the mark had only begun its abysmal descent, but the relation of wages to food prices was the only thing that mattered, or that ever matters much. In the factories of Berlin and other cities I found wages running from 14,000 to 36,000 marks a week. Where coal-mines had not suspended work as "passive resistance," the average was about 24,000. A builder who used to get 40 gold marks a week (£2) now got 48,000, worth about 6 shillings. A printer gave the same amounts. A tram-conductor put the purchase value of his wages at 4 gold marks a week. Margarine was everywhere taken as the standard of value, and the price of margarine shifted around 6,000 marks a pound. A German miner thus had to work a day and a half to earn a pound of margarine, which an English miner might have earned in half-an-hour. Rationed bread was 650 marks the 4lb. loaf, but only one loaf a week was allowed per family, and unrationed bread, which at first cost 1,200 marks a loaf, was rising beyond

calculation after the French invasion. Milk, being 750 marks the litre, was beyond hope ; sausage was almost as remote, and fresh meat no worker ever thought of. Coal cost 60 marks the pound, and people stayed in bed to keep warm. In the work-people's houses I found no sheets, and hardly any bedclothes, or underclothing. Boots cost 35,000 marks the pair, and children sold their shoes and went barefoot. Children of eight or nine looked like children of five or six, and tuberculosis was rapidly increasing. German economists told me the country might support forty millions on her own resources, without much industrial or foreign trade. The surplus of twenty-five millions was being exterminated ; the total population would thus sink below the level of the French, and a vital point in M. Poincaré's desires would be securely gained.

Then from the hostile frontiers of what had formerly been friendly Bohemia, I turned back into the region of the Thüringerwald, once so intimately familiar to me. Nearly forty years had passed since I was a student in Jena, and, for the first time since then, I was visiting the scene again. Not a living creature remembered me, or even remembered the years that I was there. Except, perhaps, the withered old horse which contrived to crawl with me from the station to the Black Bear Hotel, where our gayest and most luxurious spirits used once to revel in beer. With his whitened eye, that ageing horse did seem to recognise a coeval ; for, in pity for his age, he alone had been spared when all his companions were sacrificed to the expense of fodder.

In the past I never supposed I should some day come to lecture in the familiar University rooms ; but I had hardly arrived when the “Lector” in modern English invited me to speak to his students in my own tongue, and they appeared to understand all I said. Some of them were women, and there were no women students in my time, though Haeckel once told me of his difficulty in excluding a Russian woman who insisted upon studying medicine. Now there were about

500 women out of the 2,700 students, and most of them studied medicine. Of the men, the great majority took one branch or other of the vast subject called "Philosophy," which includes Natural Science. A good many studied Law, a good many Medicine. Only about seventy took Theology.

In Goethe's Weimar I walked once more hand in hand with the man who had been so long my master and intimate daily friend. As we visited again his simple Gartenhaus beside the wintry park, and watched the little Ilm still running dark and swift as when "many an immortal song" rose from its banks; gazed at the bronze statue of himself and his friend, standing with clasped hands in front of his old theatre, we continued to converse together, "as speaks one ghost to another ghost." I know the worst that can be said against Goethe—his diffusion of interest, his barren wastes of dullness, his lack of self-criticism, his frequent failure to conclude as he had begun. Never mind! He was a man after my own heart, and, unless I go all the way back to Socrates, I have not met another ghost with whom I so gladly consort.

In Weimar, too, I saw again the old dwelling place of poor Herder, whose services to literature and thought, I, in my youth, attempted, quite vainly, to recall. And in his church close by, I saw the huge private pew or box of the famous Grand Dukes, always empty now but still preserved as a symbol of transitory things. So was the Grand Ducal Schloss, in front of which no bodyguard now stood ready to form in line and present arms when the cry "Heraus!" preluded the approach of Grand Ducal blood. It was all encouraging, and yet one could not escape a certain sadness, as when one penetrates the tomb of an Egyptian queen.

More encouraging still was a vast working-men's meeting that I attended in Magdeburg, when I went to the Workmen's Hall to hear Graf Hellmuth von Gerlach, leader of the German Pacifists. He spoke well for over an hour, but more interesting to me was the strong protest of a veteran

officer, who appealed to German feeling, German national pride, German history, and all that could move the German heart, never, never to attempt negotiations with the treacherous French again, but to endure passively in the sure and certain hope that German honour would at some time be vindicated by a resurrection. Graf von Gerlach, violently pacific, thereupon rushed at the speaker on the platform. The chairman, who had lost one arm in the war, dragged the ardent patriot back to his chair, and amid the wild shouting of the audience, he was hustled from the building. Rather needlessly, I thought, for he was but a good old officer, all of the good old time. From Hamburg, to which many directors of the Ruhr mines and factories had removed so as to escape the violence and imprisonment by which the French hoped to break down the policy of passive resistance, I was obliged to return to London, where I could more freely congratulate M. Poincaré upon his success in bringing ruin upon his foes, as well as upon ourselves, who had been his friends.

Throughout that summer (1923), when M. Poincaré's triumph was its height, I feared that my services in acclaiming his success were at an end. For I was kept quietly at home, bidding an indignant farewell to the *Nation* under its new auspices, writing for Brailsford's *New Leader*, and the *Baltimore Sun*, bringing out my *Changes and Chances*, visiting once more with intense interest the castles and ancient churches along the Welsh Marches, and moving about in a partially pacified Ireland. Meantime M. Poincaré was advancing from glory to glory. In the hope of breaking down the passive resistance in the Ruhr, one Bürgermeister of its cities after another was fined and imprisoned for terms of years. On Easter Eve (March 31) French troops entered the Krupp works, and fired upon a peaceful crowd of workers, killing fourteen and wounding sixty. At a trial of the Krupp directors enormous fines were imposed, and some were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, others to fifteen. The

Ruhr and Rhineland were encircled by French outposts, and a customs barrier established between occupied and unoccupied Germany. The complicated railway system in the Ruhr was taken over by the French, and the skilled German railway servants were dismissed and exiled, their places being taken by Frenchmen, who could not work the lines. Over 17,000 men, women, and children depending on railway work were thus thrown upon the rest of Germany without work or livelihood. Schools in the Ruhr were requisitioned, teachers expelled, and nearly 130,000 children deprived of the education which Germans estimate so highly. Over 5,000 German workmen were imprisoned, many flogged and starved. A rigid curfew was imposed. Barbed-wire entanglements were erected round the Ruhr district, and no one allowed to pass on pain of death, without special and rare permission. Banks were openly plundered. Brothels, with a suitable number of women, were ordered to be supplied for the French troops in the cities, and other supplies requisitioned. German and English Liberal papers were rigidly excluded, the *Manchester Guardian* being, of course, among the number.

Finally, the Separatist Movement, or the forcible creation of a Rhineland Republic, was encouraged by the French authorities to the utmost of their power. Hardened criminals were raked from the German gaols ; bullies were collected from notorious brothels ; every species of scoundrel was enlisted, armed and paid to resist the German police and the indignant population, the French troops coming to the assistance of the Separatists whenever they were in difficulties. Trade stopped. All Europe suffered. Next to Germany herself, England perhaps suffered most. Speaking in the House of Commons at the end of February, Mr. Bonar Law had called the Ruhr " the jugular vein of German industry." M. Poincaré during the summer succeeded in cutting the vein, and the enemy was bleeding to death. But upon his former Allies, the victors in the war, a slow death was

approaching, too. The German mark by mid-September had fallen to 1,250,000,000 to the £1 sterling, and it was still to fall lower. What trade was possible with the German people? Where were reparations to come from? Even international thieving could not scrape them up.

By the end of September M. Poincaré was able to congratulate himself upon accomplishing another feat : he was killing off the enemy's population. For the third quarter of 1923 the infant mortality of Germany rose 21 per cent in comparison with the rate of the same quarter in the previous year, while the birthrate dropped 15 per cent. In face of all these evidences of success, it was no wonder that M. Poincaré contemptuously disregarded the strong Notes of protest forwarded to him by Lord Curzon in July, and again, in still stronger terms, on August 11. This “ slaughter of the innocents ” hastened the political victory, for, overwhelmed by the utter ruin of the people in trade, in livelihood, and in life, towards the end of September (the 26th) the German Government, under the firm influence of Herr Stresemann, declared passive resistance at an end and the French Premier's triumph reached its height. It was true that, speaking in London just four weeks later, General Smuts used the ominous words : “ Four or five years ago they were singing their songs of victory ; to-day they were all—victor and vanquished alike—marching to certain and inevitable defeat.” But M. Poincaré and his scanty supporters in England raised again the hymn of praise, the *Te Deum* of their triumph, and if the destruction of a helpless enemy in peace time can be accounted a triumph, their exultant strains were justified.

Suddenly, at the end of October, I was enabled to add my voice to the pæans of the French victory, for the *Manchester Guardian* sent me to “ the occupied area ” in Germany in place of Cecil Squire Sprigge, who was anxious to return home. There was indeed a state of war, if that can be called a war in which, to imitate the Horatian adage, “ you beat,

and I am beaten." Even the British force centralised at Cologne was almost besieged. To the comfort of all Germans, it still maintained its position there under Sir Alexander Godley, and upheld its fine reputation for justice, good-nature, and decent behaviour. From our circumscribed sphere all Separatists were carefully excluded, and within its limits none of the exactions enforced by the French in the Ruhr was practised. But our frontiers were surrounded by French and Belgian outposts, and our authorities, both military and civil, lived in perpetual fear of finding our supplies and communications cut. The open support of the Separatists by France with money and arms made even General Godley doubt whether a Rhine Republic was not now inevitable, and, what was more ominous, even the stalwart Bürgermeister Adenauer was shaken, and began to question whether it might now be worth while to purchase peace by some temporary agreement with the common enemies of his country.

At Coblenz I called upon Lord Kilmarnock, our representative upon the Rhineland Commission, which had its headquarters there. Natural diplomacy held him silent upon the action of France in defying our country's dissent, but he openly praised the Belgians for having just withdrawn their support of the Separatists in Aix. Close beside his office was the Separatist headquarters in the old Schloss, and there I had some converse with their German leader, a powerful and remorseless person, born to lead scoundrels, and leading them with obvious effect. About ten days later, further up the Rhine, I found the beautiful old town of Andernach lying dead under the invasion of Separatists, who had fallen upon her less than a month before, had plundered the shops, stolen the motors, slaughtered the oxen and pigs, annexed the coal and stopped the factories. By the Rhineland Commission the bearing of arms had been prohibited, but the Separatist "Commissar" openly told me that at least ten per cent of his followers were fully

armed, and no one cared what the English on the Commission said about it. Who then supplied the arms? Every child in the Rhineland knew.

At the Separatist headquarters I was informed that throughout the town and neighbourhood absolute tranquillity prevailed. A few provisions had been requisitioned, but what then? Young men must live, and they had paid for everything with signed promises, as every army does on the march. The Commissar and his pseudo-Bürgermeister were grieved to the heart to hear that everyone in the town had been thrown out of work, for they boasted themselves philanthropists and democrats of an advanced type. In proof of their solicitude for humanity they had set the unemployed to work at cutting down trees upon a neighbouring hill. Always anxious to discover a solution for unemployment (the most difficult problem before my own country), I proceeded to the scene of this economic experiment, and watched the poor creatures—professional men, shopkeepers, and factory hands—sawing at any tree-trunk that came handy, beginning three or four feet from the ground where sawing was easier, and at last pushing the tree down, so as to leave a stump with long and jagged splinters. I remembered the shattered woods of Thiepval and recognised that the results of philanthropic labour very closely resembled the results of war.

But badly as the Rhine fared, the Ruhr fared worse. One might compare the Ruhr district to our Black Country, but it is larger in extent, being a rough ellipse, some thirty-five miles one way, by twenty-five the other. Within the ellipse there is still a good deal of agricultural land, and one comes upon old-fashioned German villages with wooden houses and high-pitched roofs, where peasants still cultivate their bits of field. The Ruhr river itself, which meanders through low hills along the southern part of the district, till it issues into the Rhine at Ruhrort, is not a foul and sluggish stream, like the rivers in our own manufacturing counties, but to

the end remains clean and swift, as a mountain river should be.

While I was in Essen and the other chief cities of the district, 95 per cent of the mines were idle, and the factories and railways hardly worked at all. Passive resistance had ceased some weeks before, but the skilled Westphalians had been exiled or imprisoned, and the substitutes imported from France, Poland, Belgium and Czecho-Slovakia could not understand the mines or factories, still less the railways. It was a marvel that through Essen, at the heart of the district, the French now succeeded in passing 8 per cent of the former passenger trains, and 3 per cent of the goods trains. All along the lines trucks stood in hundreds rotting, and if they had been originally loaded with earth or straw or vegetables, they showed a fine crop of grass and weeds on the top. They looked like little gardens, and a long row of them beside the main street to the station at Essen daily delighted my sense of the picturesque. Goods, however, had been known to reach Berlin in ten days, and our Vice-Consul, having to travel by train owing to a weight of luggage, succeeded in making Essen from Cologne (about 40 miles) in ten hours. Having exiled the experienced railwaymen, the French, since the cessation of passive resistance, had allowed about one-fifth of them to return. It was a sign of grace.

In passing through Düsseldorf one day on my way to Essen, I saw the people storming the provision shops and flinging everything out upon the streets. In Essen itself that day, the entrances to the poorest quarters and to the Krupp works were blocked with French troops, armoured cars, machine-guns, and all. Shots were fired, apparently on both sides, and two workmen were killed on the spot, twenty wounded. A crowd had been demanding relief or higher wages, but no one knew what relief or wages might be worth from hour to hour. One Wednesday I got only 600,000,000,000 marks to the pound sterling. The following Monday I got

2,200,000,000,000. A woman at night would think she had enough millions of marks to buy a pound of potatoes next morning, but when morning came she might have only enough for half a pound. Nearly the whole Ruhr district with its six million souls and bodies had to live on food imported from the country, and even if the food could get through the French barriers, the peasants refused to sell when the mark, unstable as water, was running down from nothing to nothing.

Early in December, a sort of truce was at last patched up between Krupp's and the "M.I.C.U.M." (*Mission Interalliée de Contrôle des Usines et des Mines*). The terms were hard almost to destruction, but at least they allowed many miners to find work again. About the same time the German Government declared a kind of capital levy by ordaining the "Rentenmark" to be worth one billion of the current marks, which were rapidly wiped out.

On the anniversary of the Ruhr invasion they published the following official statistics: The country, up to the cessation of passive resistance, had lost between 175 and 200 million pounds sterling owing to suspended production, dislocation of transport and posts, financing of imports from abroad as substitutes for Ruhr production, commandeering by the French of goods, plant, and rolling-stock, confiscation of cash, and suspension of all revenue from the Ruhr and Rhineland; the dislocation of all German trade and life in the unoccupied parts was not included; the numbers of Germans killed was 132; officials and workmen expelled, 39,524; their families exiled with them, 106,134; out of over 5,000 Germans imprisoned by the French, 2,021 were still in prison; schools up to 209 for 127,000 children had been commandeered and closed; of newspapers 173 had been suppressed. Of the "invisible" losses to the mind, spirit, peace, and goodwill of the German people no statistical tables were possible. As in the former war, the German people owned their defeat, and in the future they perceived

no hope. Unless, indeed, one might read hope in the concluding words of an article upon these lamentable results in the Berlin *Vorwärts*. "Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen," it wrote, "listen to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald!" The advice was wise, but in February 1924, it was described by one of our chief Liberal papers as "quaint." At the moment of M. Poincaré's supreme victory no doubt it sounded quaint, and another of our guiding papers bade us "take off our hats to France." All take off their hats to indisputable success.

CHAPTER XXXII

“LABOUR”

MY CONNECTION with the Labour Party had begun long before their fall after their brief spell of office without power. Though I had always felt admiration for Mr. Asquith's scholarly mind and classical restraint in speech ; though I pitied him deeply in the cruel conflict between his own quietly progressive nature and the appalling decision for war ; and sympathised with him still more deeply when he fell as Zimri's victim, I felt that the Liberal precepts to which he clung were becoming obsolete, and there was little in his supplanter's brilliant and changeful personality to restore confidence in the Liberal faith. In any case, when the Labour Party conceded the point that a “brain-worker” might rank beside a “manual worker” as a member of the Party, I felt that the spirit of the time was drawing me into their number ; and when the election of December 1923, showed the Labour Party to be second in the House of Commons, with 191 members (as against 258 Conservatives and 158 Liberals), I joined with those who urged Ramsay MacDonald to take office, if mainly not to disappoint his followers in the country, and to show that Labour was capable of government even though obliged to lean upon the reed of Liberal support.

There were plenty of reasons for hesitation, the strongest being the problem of the unemployed. For if the Party that stood for the working people could not come to the relief of their most urgent need, and alleviate the most terrible apprehension that can haunt men, women, and children, what reliance upon a Labour Government could working

people place? I recognised the difficulties of Ramsay MacDonald's position, but was none the less relieved when he announced to us at a *New Leader* lunch that, if the King sent for him, he would undertake the task. The refusal of Mr. Asquith to desecrate Liberal principles by concluding an active coalition with the Conservatives, among whom Mr. Baldwin had casually propagated the heresy of Protection, settled the matter, and on February 12, 1924, from the Press Gallery of the stuffy and paralysing House of Commons, I witnessed the first appearance of Labour men upon the Government Bench.

For the first week or two I heard open expressions of fear, horror, and disgust. The wits and "social successes" who, in the words of the Psalmist, grin like a dog and run about the West End, not only sneered at our new Government's clothes, but foretold national calamity and the collapse of our Imperial grandeur. They prognosticated the inevitable fall of the heavens and the shares, and when the heavens remained fresh and strong in their accustomed position, while shares actually rose, the melancholy natural to disappointed prophets was but partially tempered by the consolations of pecuniary stability.

But what about the remarkable man who on that 12th day of February, 1924, stood before the House of Commons as the first of Labour Prime Ministers, and, with fine and rather solemn voice, spoke of "confidence" rather than "tranquillity," of attempts to stand upon a friendly footing with France without bullying Germany, of the necessary recognition of Russia, of unemployment, not to be cured by mere palliatives, and of the Government's intention to be economic and scientific in dealing with human capital? I had known Ramsay MacDonald off and on for nearly forty years, and had carefully followed his career from the time when he lived in Bloomsbury among a peculiar society whose two main rules were supposed to be (1) to live a perfect life, and (2) to subscribe half a crown a year, the

second rule being harder to observe than the first. Like most of his Ministers, he had learnt in the school of life to suffer poverty, and, like most Scotsmen, he had recognised its disadvantages. Step by step he had worked his way up, for many years in association with the high aims and loving-kindness of the enthusiastic woman whom he married. Some called him vain, but in that respect I had not observed much difference between him and other politicians, actors, novelists, poets, officers, clergy, and men or women. Some said he had from the first played steadily for his own hand, persistently scheming for the attainment of his present position. Ambition may exist, I suppose, in a Socialist as in a member of less idealistic Parties, but it is hard to imagine an ambitious schemer denouncing the war from the beginning, refusing office under the War Ministry, refusing to support even his own Labour associates in their war services and propaganda. In February 1924, almost ten years had passed since the beginning of the war, and for the first four of those years he had been detested, reviled, calumniated, and despised as the most unpopular man in the whole country, with the possible exception of my other friend, E. D. Morel. Time does sometimes bring its revenges; but only the most malignant of his opponents or intimate enemies could thereafter hint at insincerity or calculated ambition.

Another charge was more difficult to answer. He was rather rich in nicknames: “ Ramsay,” “ Mac,” “ J.R.M.” “ Our Great Leader ” (with an ironic emphasis on the “ Great,” as pronounced by the intimate enemies above mentioned). And I like to think that nicknames (of which I have had so many since childhood that my Christian name has never been used) imply a certain geniality, a cordial and familiar nature, inclined to sport. As a Scotsman, Ramsay MacDonald is inclined to the difficult and unproductive sport of golf, and I know him as a fine walker; but I doubt if anyone has ever thought him genial, cordial, or familiar.

There is something aloof in his nature, as though his spirit dwelt alone in an unapproachable shrine of his being. That loneliness may arise from the kind of shyness which induces shyness in others. Or, since many called him a Mystic, it may come from a Mysticism that I do not understand. I am never quite clear what a Mystic is, but I imagine a man with some hidden power, endowed with a spiritual vision reaching beyond the perception of common mankind. It may well be that a Highlander of mountain birth and religious nurture possesses that vision, and the consciousness of so incalculable a possession may seclude a man from ordinary mortals who possess no vision at all. But when the worst was said, even by members of his own Party, Ramsay MacDonald retained that inestimable gift of "personality" which defies analysis or carping blame. Reverently as I stood before many other of our leaders, I could not imagine anyone else so fitted by nature, training, and travel to take the lead.

At a Party reception given by Noel Buxton in the Hyde Park Hotel the night before the first Labour Parliament opened, an observant woman remarked to me, "At any rate, we have the handsomest of all Prime Ministers." In that matter, women are the judges, and one can only hope that they base their judgment upon character expressed in appearance. More significant was her subsequent remark to Frank Simonds, the American journalist: "You know, I suppose, that you are present at the beginning of a new epoch!" The words were ironic, in mockery of a common phrase employed by the Labour papers at the time. But Frank Simonds replied, I think without irony, though he has an ironic mind: "It is like the birth of a new Christianity!" And she answered, "I hope it will be more successful than the old!" Indeed, we felt something of that "new epoch" in the air. Mr. Baldwin recognised it when, speaking on the same day in acknowledgment of his re-election as Leader of his Party, said: "The Labour Party is pervaded by a feeling which sends the workers of that Party to canvass, to

do propaganda, and to conduct the business of elections without profit or reward ! ”

The attitude of all Christian Powers and many Christian Bishops had made it doubtful whether Christianity had much concern with promoting peace among men ; but under Ramsay MacDonald the “ new Christianity ” certainly tended towards peace in Europe. Within a few weeks, or even days, he changed the whole atmosphere of European relations as Frank Simonds said in the passage quoted above, and he changed it by promoting peace. By mere friendliness of tone he set the country again upon a tolerable footing even with the obdurate M. Poincaré, and when M. Poincaré was succeeded by M. Herriot in May, the friendliness became still more cordial. The Conference of London to consider the Dawes Scheme of Reparations met in July ; the German delegates came over, and by the middle of August a fairly satisfactory agreement was concluded, by which the French promised to evacuate the Ruhr within a year, and Dortmund at once. The Dawes Scheme meantime was to proceed.

Even before Parliament assembled in February, Ramsay MacDonald had informed the Soviet Republics that Great Britain now recognised them as the *de jure* Government of what was once the Russian Empire, and requested them to send delegates for the Conference. At this Conference, which met in London in the middle of April, the Prime Minister, after stating its main objects, urged the Russians not to let themselves be influenced by attacks made upon them in this country, any more than he was influenced by attacks made upon him by Russians, such as a recent violent onslaught by Zinovieff, the President of the Third International in Moscow. The reference is important as partly explaining the apparent indifference with which MacDonald at first regarded the “ Zinovieff letter ” which was the main cause of his defeat in the following October. After negotiations that appeared interminable, as any conversation with Russians

is likely to appear to the English mind, a draft Treaty was at last signed in early August—a Commercial Treaty, a general Treaty, and proposals for an indeterminate loan when certain conditions had been fulfilled. It may be said that MacDonald's overthrow was ultimately due rather to this Treaty with the Soviets and the proposed loan than even to the "Campbell case" and the "Zinovieff letter"; but at the time it seemed another step towards peace to all except those who would remain the sworn enemies of a Soviet Government, no matter what terms might be proposed. A third step was MacDonald's personal attendance at the Assembly of the League of Nations in September, when he delivered a speech upon the proposals for peace and disarmament that encouraged the whole League to acquire some confidence in the reality of its existence and its powers.

In these triumphs for the cause of peace I could, of course, take no personal part, beyond applauding our Foreign Secretary whenever I got the chance. But I have sometimes wondered whether it would not have saved catastrophe in the end if Noel Buxton had been given the Foreign Office, acting in close co-operation with the Prime Minister, who in that case would have been left free to adjust the turbulent differences within his own Party. His childhood and youth in the Essex fields had fitted Noel Buxton for his Agricultural Ministry, but he knew quite as much about Europe as about cows and ploughs. With Arthur Ponsonby—a man devoted to peace, in spite of experience in diplomacy—as Under Secretary at his side, he would have served well, and possibly the error of the "Campbell case" might have been avoided. For if it was an error for Sir Patrick Hastings as Attorney-General to charge Mr. Campbell with publishing "incitement to mutiny" in the *Workers' Weekly*, it was a greater error for the Prime Minister to compel his Attorney-General to withdraw the charge on flimsy excuses because his Left Wing raised an outcry.

The "Zinovieff letter," whether genuine or forged, did

not surprise me. Everyone, however slightly acquainted with the Marxist doctrine, knew that the Soviets felt bound to instigate a general revolution—a “ planetary revolution ”—and that our country would be their first objective as being their strongest obstacle. Karl Marx, labouring at Blue Books under the stifling dome of the British Museum, had compounded a disturbing history of British Industrialism, but he knew little of the British people. Lenin knew more, and he foresaw that England would be the last country to emulate the Russian methods. But even Lenin did not realise that nothing would stir the English working man to bloody revolution but starvation or Prohibition. Still less did Zinovieff perceive the British indifference to theoretic phrases, and the British objection to foreign dictation. Since the further revelations made by Mr. Marlowe in the *Observer* of March 4, 1928, I am inclined to think the letter may have been a forgery, but I still do not regard the question of forgery or genuineness as one of great importance. For there was nothing unusual, nothing unexpected about the letter. To me there are still only two unexplained points of interest : (1) How the Foreign Office came by a copy (only a copy) of the letter, and (2) How some four or five people came by a copy of that letter, and were able to betray it to Mr. Marlowe for use in the *Daily Mail* of Saturday, October 25, 1924.

By a mere coincidence, I had a distant and casual connection with that ordinary but fatal document. On October 10 (the day after the Dissolution owing to the Labour Government's defeat on the Campbell case), Brailsford rang me up to say that MacDonald had asked that I should accompany him on his tour through England in preparation for the election due on the 29th. On the 14th I met him at Charles Trevelyan's election hall in Newcastle, where he had a reception such as English people always give to courageous defeat. Next morning I sat upon my suitcase at the entrance to the High Level Bridge till the car came past

with MacDonald and Lord Arnold, and we made the rest of the journey together. That day we drove through Durham, Darlington, Ripon, Harrogate, Leeds, Dewsbury, Spenn Valley, Huddersfield, along the Colne Valley, grimly beautiful in gathering twilight, over the hills to Oldham, and so to an immense meeting at the Bellevue Gardens in Manchester. At all those places MacDonald spoke, and at some to large open-air audiences. At all, except Durham, which lay paralysed under the glory of its cathedral and episcopal predilections, he was received with fine enthusiasm. After each speech he said to Lord Arnold and me, "It's no good. I am done. I can speak no more. My throat is worn out. You must just announce that I can't speak. Or you must speak for me." But at the sight of each vast audience awaiting him, he forgot all about his throat and his exhaustion. The great voice poured out as usual. The gestures were as free and natural, the eloquence as fine.

After the enormous meeting in Manchester, we drove on to the home of Lord Arnold's brother at Altrincham, just over the Cheshire border. It was the night of October 15, and while I was trying to fit up an electric oxygen machine lent by Dr. Hector Munro for the benefit of MacDonald's throat, a King's Messenger arrived with a despatch box containing a lot of documents, among which lay the letter that was to prove fatal. Before he went to bed that night, after so strenuous a day, MacDonald added the note to Rakovsky, Russian *Chargé d'Affaires* in London, which in its final form contained the words :

"It is my duty to inform you that His Majesty's Government cannot allow this propaganda, and must regard it as a direct interference from outside in British domestic affairs.

"No one who understands the constitution and relationship of the Communist International will doubt its intimate connection and contact with the Soviet Government. No Government will ever tolerate an arrangement with a foreign

Government by which the latter is in formal diplomatic relations of a correct kind with it, whilst at the same time a propagandist body organically connected with that foreign Government encourages and even orders subjects of the former to plot and plan revolutions for its overthrow. Such conduct is not only a grave departure from the rules of international comity, but a violation of specific and solemn undertakings repeatedly given to His Majesty's Government."

The agreement to that effect signed by the Soviet Government on June 4, 1923, is then added.¹

Early next morning the King's Messenger left with the Zinovieff document, MacDonald's note to Rakovsky, and the regular instructions to the Foreign Office to publish if the letter were proved authentic. I noticed that on that morning (the 16th) I had time to go carefully round his garden with Lord Arnold's brother, and we did not set off till ten o'clock. MacDonald seemed just as unperturbed as usual. The letter had not affected him. It was too ordinary an occurrence.

The meeting in the Birmingham Market was perhaps the finest and most triumphant of the whole journey, and as MacDonald and I drove away to Harrison Barrow's house in the suburbs, it may be that he was thinking for the first time that day of the Zinovieff letter and the Russians. My part on the journey was to keep silence, and certainly never to ask questions ; but then, moved perhaps by a kind of " telepathy," I suddenly asked whether he had not found it difficult to deal with the Russian delegates, and he replied, " Not difficult, but almost impossible." He went on to describe how the Russians were constantly shifting their ground, going back on what seemed settled, and undermining his intentions. I was thinking mainly of Georgia, and he explained how hard and vainly he had endeavoured to

¹ Blue Book : Russia, No. 3 (1927), pp. 28-9.

save that tormented people, among whom persecution and slaughter had recently raged more terribly than usual since the Soviet breach of their treaty, and the subsequent invasion in February 1921. But he also spoke of Russian intrigue in Persia, Afghanistan, China, and other countries, as is now known to everyone. It is possible that the memory of the previous night haunted him with increased suspicions, and revived doubts which he had lately overcome.

From Birmingham we drove on through sleepy Droitwich, Worcester on my dear river Severn, Malvern, where the parasitic population booed us, Ross, along the beautiful Valley of the Wye (I suppose my attraction to MacDonald is partly due to his keen sense of natural beauty), and so through Monmouth, to Cardiff and other Welsh towns, MacDonald speaking at every important place, either in a hall or market. And so we drew near his constituency at Aberavon. For the last three miles the crowd was so thick that we had to shut off the engine, and hardly made a mile an hour among the excited cheers and shouting of the work-people, some of whom had set words in MacDonald's honour to the "Men of Harlech," and sang them with Welsh perfection. The broadsheet of the *Daily Mail* next morning described the Prime Minister's reception there as "cold and silent." For my own sake I wished the imaginative editor had been right.

But victory must be applauded, and by its unexplained intrigue in regard to the Zinovieff letter the *Daily Mail* won its war against Labour. Fear of Bolshevism gave the Conservatives the big battalions on whose side God is supposed to stand, and Mr. Baldwin was called upon to resume his unsuccessful struggle against the meshes in which mine-owners and profiteers contrived to entangle his quiet and honourable soul. I have throughout felt a natural sympathy with such a man. For he loves the English countryside. Like MacDonald, he is instinctively aware of beauty. Like me, he loves dogs, and seems born for the homely squire's country

life. He loves good literature too, and in old days I should have welcomed him as my colleague or rival in composing weekly “ middles ” for the *Nation*, though perhaps the old *Spectator*, under St. Loe Strachey, would have suited him better. I could not have imagined anyone more fitted to lead those Young Conservatives who have attempted to revive the “ Young England ” party of Disraeli’s early life. And I have all the more regretted the extremes of reaction to which he has been driven, as in his treatment of the coal-miners, by a far more powerful body of his supporters.

For myself, after MacDonald’s defeat, I felt inclined, like the member of the Opposition in Plato, to sit under the shadow of a great rock until the tyranny were overpassed. But for the livelihood of myself and others I had, of course, to continue in journalism—doing work for Brailsford’s *New Leader*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and a few other papers, and bringing out *More Changes More Chances* which was published in 1925. In the spring of the same year I also, reluctantly, undertook a difficult piece of work—the exploration of the “ Douglas-Pennant Case.” Twice or three times I refused, but Mr. C. P. Scott, the venerable editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, came up himself to urge me, and no one could refuse “ C.P.” Like the Dreyfus case, with which it has been justly compared, it was a complicated and perplexing intrigue to follow, all the more because men and women of high position, great wealth, and good reputation were deeply involved. I felt as though I were trying to swim in a swamp of bottomless mud. It was like a detective story in which one repeatedly loses the clue ; and when at last I perceived the solution, I almost despaired of deciding whether the injustice had been perpetrated by malign jealousy or gullible ignorance. On the whole, I concluded that it was the one acting on the other. But after working through the mass of evidence, I was convinced that Miss Douglas-Pennant had suffered shameful injustice.

As in the Dreyfus case, the injustice did not concern one

person alone. The honour of our whole legal system was involved, and it is not to the credit of Prime Ministers in all three Parties in turn that they have persistently refused the only redress possible—an open and honourable re-examination. Of course, all men and women are equal before the Law, but one cannot help noticing that some of Miss Douglas-Pennant's accusers were endowed with titles, wealth, high position, and social influences that might be useful to a Party in power, or even in Opposition.¹

The year 1925 was enlightened by a repetition of my favourite walk along Hadrian's Wall from Hexham to Carlisle, and then further into my own ancestral Lake Country. But it was marked also by one failure and two lost chances. The failure was a visit to Paris in the vain attempt to induce M. Leon Blum and other leaders of the Socialist or Labour Party in the Chamber to advocate peace in Morocco with Abdul Krim, who was gallantly holding out for his people in the Rif. One lost chance was the collapse of an invitation to Peru, which I was asked to describe, ultimately for the benefit of some railway scheme. I had no interest in the proposed railway, but I longed to see a condor flying over the Andes, and so was disappointed when, as business people say, the design "failed to materialise." That was not my fault, but for the other lost chance I shall always blame myself. In the early morning of March 27, while I was engaged writing as usual against time, someone called up on the telephone and asked me, in the name of a big American Syndicate, if I would fly over the North Pole with Amundsen. Perhaps my vitality was low that early morning; perhaps my mind was preoccupied; perhaps the invitation was too suddenly sprung upon a naturally slow and hesitating nature; perhaps I remembered my increasing age. For some such foolish reason I refused. If Amundsen had written,

¹ See *The Douglas-Pennant Case: A Review and a Restatement*, by Henry W. Nevins (reprinted from the *Manchester Guardian*, June 10 to June 13, 1925). No answer has been made by Miss Douglas-Pennant's accusers.

instead of calling up in that peremptory manner, I should have accepted. For I always keep in mind the words of Ulysses to his ageing companions :

*A questa tanto picciola vigilia
De vestri sensi, ch'è del rimanente
Non vogliate negar l'esperienza,
Diretro all sol, del mondo senza gente.*¹

I regret the refusal all the more because Amundsen and his crew did not perish like Ulysses and his friends, but lost only one of the two aeroplanes, spent only three weeks in digging the other out of the ice, and returned alive.

¹ *Inferno*, xxvi. 114.

CHAPTER XXXIII

“THOSE HOLY FIELDS”¹

LATE IN THAT SUMMER of 1926, for the tenth or eleventh time within thirty years, I had the opportunity of escaping into the Near East, and the chance brought with it the same old sense of exhilaration and deliverance. Again I should see the water purple as thick amethyst, and distinctive mountains bare but for the aromatic herbs filling all the crannies of their rocks. Again I should see the walled cities that Athenians built, or Roman Emperors, or Venetians, or Turks ; and from their fortified harbours the little boats with pointed sails would skim gaily out, hardly changed from the time when Ulysses held the rudder. The narrow streets would still be crowded with variegated peoples speaking strange words. The markets would still be heaped with strange fruits and vegetables ; all the scene pervaded by that suspicion of garlic which Parisians extol. And over all would glow the Mediterranean sky, under which the best of mankind were bred.

To Constantinople itself the years had brought changes. The Galata bridge of boats had gone. The Red Sultan had gone, and so, by a far more regrettable fate, had the harmless clans of dogs. The crimson fez had gone, supplanted by the British workman's second-hand cap, the peak worn over one ear so as still to allow obeisance with forehead to ground so long as Allah might survive. The veil had gone, and, with

¹ *To chase the pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross.*

King Henry IV, Part I, Act I, Sc. I.

faces shameless as a Christian's, women revealed their painted lips, their dyed cheeks and eyelids, their short-cropped hair, their open necks, and the beauty of legs which men conceal in cylinders of cloth. Women sat smoking in cafés. They travelled barefaced in trains and steamers. They conversed with men. They danced with men. They were European. And all this freedom was won for them in half a dozen years just through the courage of my friend Mme. Halidé—Halidé Edib of the Turkish army! What a Suffragette!

But two emblems of eternity remained: one the Turkish official with open palm, the other the Turkish porter. There he tottered, bent double under his enormous burden, which he balanced upon a huge stuffed saddle for hod. He was unshaven and filthy; tattered brown rags hardly covered his hairy brown skin; on his head he wore a little brown cap; on his feet squashy slippers tied by strings to whitey-brown stockings full of holes. So he still crawled through the streets, with eyes fixed on the ground, because the weight of his burden prevented his looking up. Turkish women had changed from swaddled chrysalises to flaunting butterflies; the Turkish horse decorated with blue beads against the evil eye had vanished before the shrieking motor; the Caliphate had departed; revolution had swept revolution away. But to the Turkish porter such changes were nothing. Revolutions in laws, governments, habits, hats, and religion were to him but passing moments in his eternal destiny. He remained unmoved, the incarnation of the working class, the emblem of eternity.

As in a dream I passed across the broad Sea of Marmora to where the coasts of Europe and Asia draw together at the Narrows of the Dardanelles. Presently on the left I could see again the hill that was Troy, and on the right the reverse slopes of the rugged cliffs that I had so often climbed when Anzac lay on the other side. As the lighthouse upon Cape Helles revolved its gleam, I watched a ghostly column beside

it appear at intervals, and supposed it was a memorial set up to men who need a visible memorial no more than the heroes of Troy. At dawn for the third time I saw Sappho's Mitylene and the olive-bearing hills of Lesbos. At noon we put into Smyrna, where Mustapha Kemal began his task of Europeanising the Turks by causing his troops or envious neighbours to drive the Greek army and the Greek inhabitants (200,000 of them, it was said) headlong from the quays to perish in the water (September 8, 1922), and consumed to ashes the Greek half of the city, so that hardly a house was standing, and none inhabited. Climbing the hill above the desolation, I discovered again the now neglected tomb of martyred Polycarp, pupil of the beloved disciple. And next day we anchored off Rhodes, Italian now, but still splendid with the buildings of rough orange stone, set there by the Knights of St. John, and hardly altered by six centuries of change. Next evening we made Cyprus, the real "Abode of Love," now protected by the British flag, in evidence of that Treaty once called "Peace with Honour," by which our country pledged herself to preserve the Armenians in Turkey. And next morning we entered Beyrout harbour, along the low cliff of which stood a vast and squalid camp erected out of scraps of board, petroleum tins, and rags by a swarm of our protected, penniless Armenians, escaped with bare life from the Turks who massacred Adana and other parts of Cilicia four or five years before. Here our trustful Armenians lived and died in human misery reduced to its lowest terms ; and dying was easy.

As in a dream I went up the Dog River (Nahr el Kelb) running into the centre of Lebanon, and marked at the entrance by rock-cut records of various conquerors who have passed that way—Assyrian and Egyptian kings, Marcus Aurelius of Rome, Napoleon and Gouraud of France, and Allenby of England. And so, across the broad valley between the two ranges of Lebanon, where Mount Hermon

seems to block the outlet of the young river Jordan, to the vast ruins of Baalbek, temple in turn of some prehistoric god, of Baal, god of the sun, of Helios the sun, of Jove the sun of the sky, quickly superseded by the worship of Christ. History—mankind's history—all in a dream! And a pleasant dream. For with me went Roland and Marjorie Vernon, on their way out to the task of defending King Feisul of Iraq from the corruption of the East. And with us, too, went Harold Buxton, most lovable and tolerant of Anglican priests, so strangely learned that, in his pre-occupation with the hardly perceptible but rancorous differences between the forms of Early Christian faith, the passing scenes that we call reality sometimes appeared to escape his notice. With him, from a mountain height, I traced the road I was later on to traverse to Damascus, half ruined by General Sarrail in carrying out the French protective mandate. Then we drove one morning past Sidon and Tyre, Phœnician cities, still gleaming on their promontories, once the scenes of mystic worship, and the homes of the first great navigators; and so we climbed to a point upon a projecting headland, where a steady sergeant of the old “2nd London” stood on watch over the gate of the Holy Land.

To an Englishman brought up last century, as I was, in a strictly Evangelical family, that land is not merely holy. It is far more intimately known than his own country. It is almost his own possession, and bewildering enthusiasts used even to hint to him that, as a descendant from “the Lost Ten Tribes,” he even had some claim to that heritage. The fragments of Jewish poetry, legend, and history, collected as one consecutive and unalterable book called the Old Testament, which was inspired directly by the spirit of God and therefore eternally true, were so accurately impressed upon his mind by reverence and daily repetition that the name of every place and river in Palestine at once suggested some scene associated with it in the Scriptural

narrative. In youth I came to know Greek literature and Greek history fairly well, but the knowledge of the Old Testament, driven into my soul as a child, remained more lasting, though my sympathy and admiration were by nature given to Athens.

This strictly Biblical education produced among those who, like myself, belong to the last century, the peculiar illusion that both the promises and the threatenings of the Jewish lawgivers and prophets were specially designed for ourselves by a foreseeing Power. We never doubted that we English Evangelicals were the Chosen People, and when, every Sunday evening, we sang in the *Magnificat*, "As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever," we gave no thought to the Jews ; and when soon afterwards, we sang in the *Nunc Dimittis* "To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel," we meant that Missionary Societies would spread the light of the Gospel to negroes, Chinese, and Indians, while God's English People retained the glory.

One morning in Jerusalem I woke to find myself, not famous, but seventy. It seemed incredible, almost ridiculous ; for I had always felt that my life was only just beginning, and I felt so still. But there was no denying it. Numbers cannot be contradicted, and accounts balance if honestly kept. With a Father of the Church, I could only say "I believe because it is impossible. It is ridiculous, therefore true." At the height of such powers of mind and body as I ever possessed I had reached the limit of life ordained by common consent. My last changes were at hand ; my last chances had almost gone.

It was still night, and the stars shone brilliantly above the silent streets, the domes and towers of the city. Inevitably at such a time and in such a place, I thought of all that had passed upon earth, and within that city's walls,

under those unchanging stars. I knew that no sun in that infinity of suns, countless as the daisies in the English fields, had ever been concerned with the affairs of man. It would be monstrous to suppose that this microscopic dust-speck of a planet counted for anything in the universe to which no limit can be imagined, and beyond which, as astronomers told me, stretches yet another universe equally incalculable in unlimited space. I knew the truth of what my earliest friend has written :

*No angel-trumpet sounds across that space,
That cold vast space through which we headlong run,
Day in, day out, along the destined ways
Of the great circle round the godlike sun.*

*Scorning our joys and heedless of our tears,
The same for ever, counting not the hours,
Unmoved, untouched by human hopes or fears,
Passes the pageant of the Heavenly Powers.*

I knew it was true, and yet, as in crazy defiance, I have sometimes shaken my puny fist at the stars themselves, as to say : " Incalculable, innumerable, inconceivable as you are, yet within this atom of a body I possess powers of which you know nothing—of which you are incapable." Even that same poet, Lucretian though he is, has allowed himself to burst through the flaming bulwarks of the world, and to write :

*Only man's mind, like flashing sabre keen,
Has smitten through the void space, piercing far ;
Only man's mind has measured the unseen,
And timed the timeless movements of the star.¹*

¹ See " Poems " by Philip G. L. Webb, C.B., C.B.E. (Nisbet). And for some account of our early friendship see pages 24 and 25.

We know nothing of the stars, or of a mind that may possibly vitalise them, but as yet we can imagine no intelligence greater than mankind's, or even different from it. So as I watched Jerusalem moving beneath them slowly to the east, my mind turned back again to the thought of my incredible age, and I recalled a verse I had made at thirty-five, when only half that age had been reached :

*Now at the centre of life's arch I stand,
And view its curve descending from to-day ;
How brief the road from birth's mysterious strand !
How brief its passage till it close in grey !
Yet by this bridge went all the immortal band,
And the world's Saviour did not reach half-way.*

From my chamber in the Austrian Hospice I was looking over the self-same scene where that "world's Saviour" who did not reach half-way had lived and died. No matter what supernatural attributes the yearning desire of mankind for something beyond experience and explanation may have added to his nature, here was the place, here the self-same scene. Somewhere close by had stood the upper chamber in which, with a sure foreboding of the doom that gathered round him, he said to the companions of his wandering life that the bread and the wine upon the table were the symbols of His flesh and Blood so soon to be consumed, and asked them to remember him whenever they partook of that food and drink. Behind me, just across a steep valley, was the garden where he prayed to be delivered from anguish such as all sensitive people feel at the approach of pain and death. Round the corner on my left, excavators not many years ago had unearthed a Roman building that may have been Pilate's judgment hall. Down the slope from the hall a path still led across the road from the Damascus Gate in front of me, and became the Via Dolorosa, the entrance of which I could plainly see. That rough lane,

darkened by arches, and rising at intervals by steps, led to the low and flattish dome where tradition placed the cross, and, within a few yards of the cross, the sepulchre. Too close together, they seemed to me ; for why should a rich man plant his garden within touch of the public gallows? But, except for curiosity, the mere locality did not matter. All that mattered was that somewhere within the scene lying before me under the stars that “world’s Saviour” had lived and died—died at half my age, or less than half.

I turned from the thought of the overwhelming tragedy once actually realised so close to the place where I was standing, and tried to recall the tenor of the seventy years—those twice thirty-five years—that made up my own bridge of life. It seemed that on the whole I had been unusually fortunate and happy in myself. With my friend Goethe, I could say “For myself I am happy enough. Joy comes streaming in upon me from every side, only for others I am not happy.” I could readily agree with Bernard Shaw’s soothing precept not to be oppressed by the sum of human suffering, nor greatly troubled by sympathy ; for “poverty and pain are not cumulative.”¹ But I am incapable of conceiving the sum of human suffering, and the suffering of individuals known to me cannot be so lightly glozed over.

Felix opportunitate mortis, is a common epitaph, though so few choose the right moment to die. But I have been happy in the opportunity of life. I was happy in being born to a grave and rigid manner of thought and behaviour ; a condition poor enough to escape softness and luxury, but so far above the poverty line under which most people live that, with the help of scholarships, I could be sent to a great school and a great university. I have known no mathematics, and nothing of natural science beyond what the observation of birds, animals, mountains, and seas could teach me. But I have contrived to learn something of the

¹ *The Intelligent Woman’s Guide*, p. 455.

language and history of Athens, Rome, Germany, France, Italy, and England, and that amount of education has "cultivated my mind" and enabled me, though with perpetual anxiety and effort, to maintain myself and a few others at the level of decency to which we were accustomed.

It has afforded me also the happy opportunity of enjoying many physical pleasures, such as walking, cycling, riding, skating, swimming, and the management of boats on sea and river; also of enjoying the best old-fashioned music, passages of which, especially from Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert, are always sounding silently in my mind. I was happy in the opportunity of working under more than one editor whom I could heartily serve, of travelling further than most people over the world, and of being present at many great and terrible crises of war, rebellion, and revolution, upon which the course of history had turned. If the old philosopher was right in defining happiness as the active exercise of a man's vital powers along the lines of excellence, and in a life affording full scope for their development,¹ I have no right to complain of scanty opportunities. Above all else, I have been happy in my intimate friends, both men and women. I had here intended to introduce a list of those to whom I owe most for comradeship in some common aim or labour; for that is the only friendship worth much. But a list, however selected, would extend the book too far, and I must think of them only as a kind of rosary, still growing, and containing many beads still devoutly counted, though they represent the dead.

Some chances I have missed, chiefly through self-distrust; and, upon the Mount of Olives, I sorrowfully repented of all the things I had not done.

But on that morning in Jerusalem (October 11, 1926) I woke to find few chances left, and if I had woke to find myself famous, it could hardly have been more disconcerting. Anxious to escape from the curse of introspection, I

celebrated the embarrassing festival by going up and down the narrow streets of the city diffusing unusual joy by presenting five whole piastres (one shilling) to the friendly beggars and cripples whose chances in life had been small compared with mine—the man who, having no legs, wriggled over the ground on his belly like a snake ; the boy whose hands were bent backwards so that he could not feed himself ; the deaf-mute who gibbered at me ; the blind man whom a child led about on a chain ; the man who contrived to say, “Good morning, sir !” but had no other qualification for charity ; the hoary prophet who kept an ageing sheep in a dark corner of a street, God knows why ; and the woman who squatted beside the Holy Sepulchre with one baby visible and another soon to be. None of them had been happy in the opportunity of life as I had been. And when I returned I found that the two Austrian maids of the Hospice had decorated my cell with red flowers, called *Fleissige Lieschen* (Busy Betties), because they bloom both summer and winter. For the maids knew that it was my birthday, having accepted my imaginative statement that I was born on the field of Waterloo, a place of which they had never heard.

Knowing, then, that I was nearing the limit of existence—slowing down into the terminus, as Cardinal Newman expressed it—I set off as quickly as possible for Bagdad by way of Beyrout, Tripolis, Homs, Palmyra (Queen Zenobia’s ruined city),¹ Rutbah, and Felujah on the Euphrates. Happily for me, the heavy rains began before we were half across the Syrian desert, converting the hard and ancient track of Eastern merchants and pilgrims into sticky mud, in which the five motors, two of them heavy with mails, sank above the axles. Day and night, wet all day and cold all night, we dug and pushed and hauled, so that when we reached Bagdad on the Tigris, I was encrusted with hardened mud from head to foot, and looked like a Rodin statue. But soon

¹ See Gibbon, Chapter XI.

after our arrival the five excellent drivers (Britons who had served in the war and stayed out there) went to the head office of the mail company, and said : " Look here ! Whatever happens, we must keep Old Bill as a digger on the Staff ! "

Laudari a laudatis ! That was the finest compliment ever paid me in the course of a long and variegated life.

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